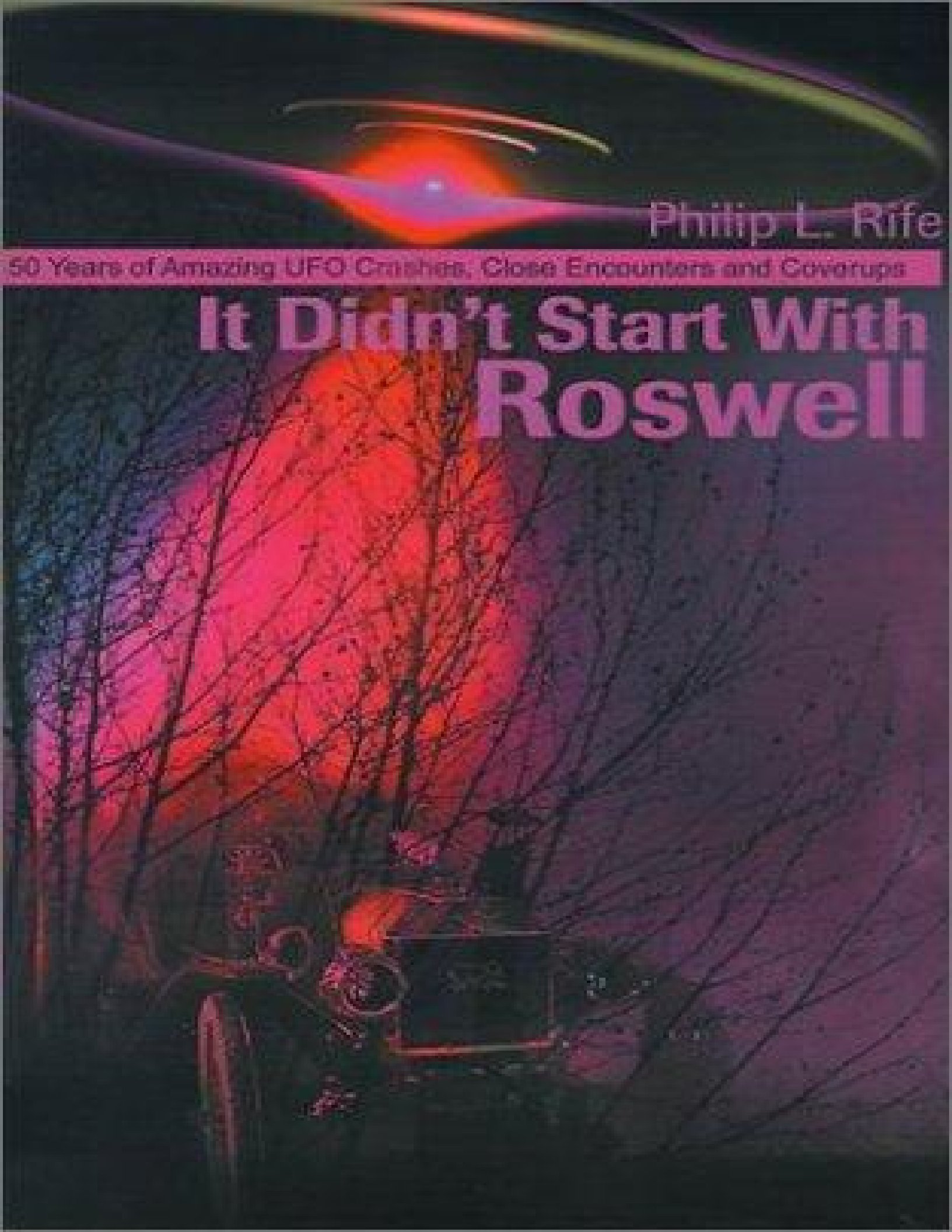
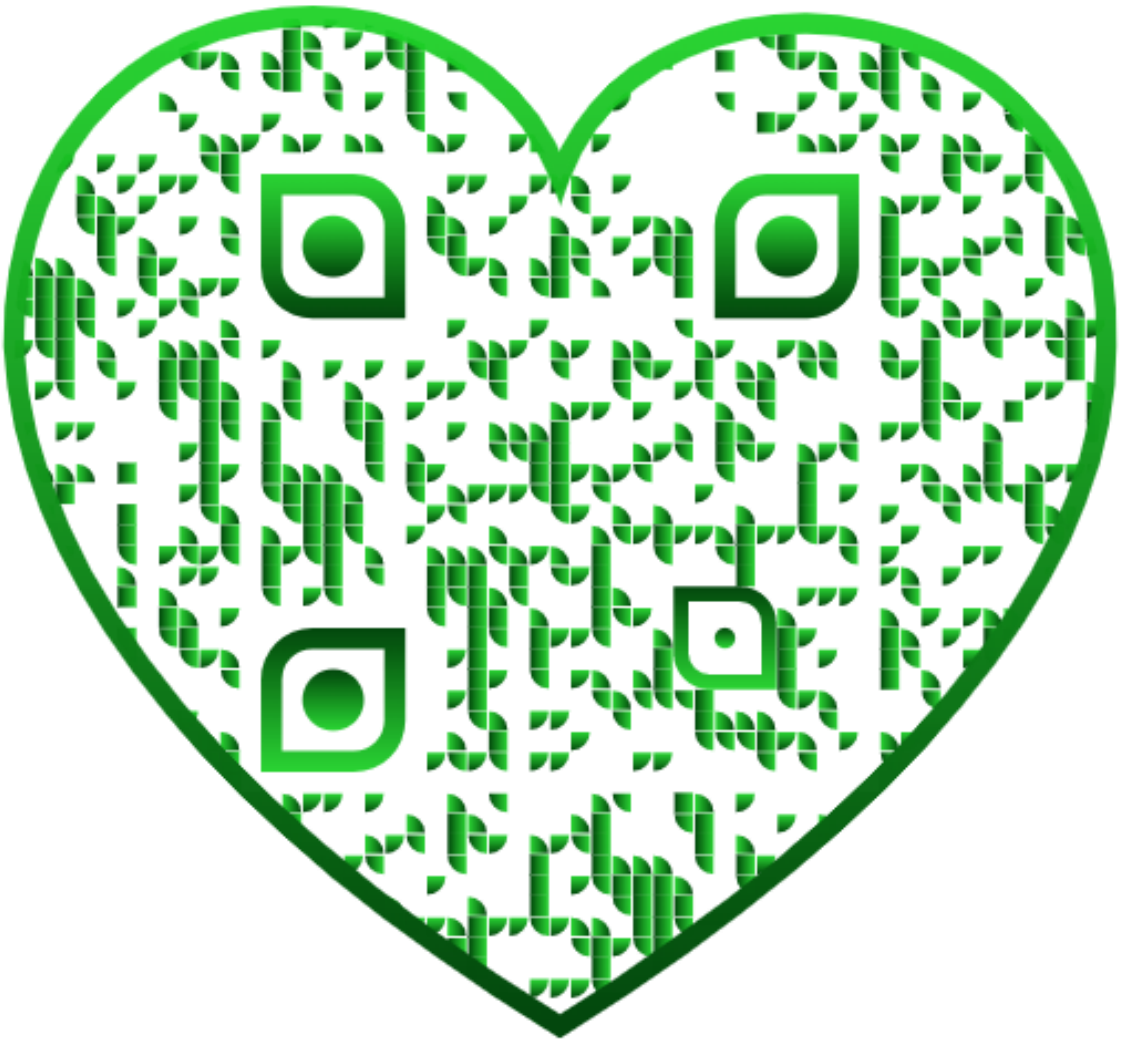
Philip L. Rife

50 Years of Amazing UFO Crashes, Close Encounters and Coverups

It Didn't Start With Roswell





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Chapter 1

Year Of The UFO

It was a banner year for Unidentified Flying Objects. There were hundreds of sightings by thousands of people in more than two dozen U.S. states. A number of these eyewitnesses reported seeing strange aerial craft which had landed, and more than a few individuals claimed to have made contact with the crafts' occupants. In addition, there were several reports of crashed UFOs.

Theoretical y, these events could have taken place almost any year since 1947, when the now-famous Roswel incident is al eged to have occurred. In truth, they al took place a half-century before Roswel , in the year 1897.

Actual y, some folks out West got a headstart on the rest of the country. Just as California is often a trendsetter today, there were sightings of unidentified aerial craft in the skies of the Golden State in November and December of 1896.

One of the earliest reports of a strange aerial visitor came from the state capital, Sacramento. On November 18, a local newspaper informed its readers:

"Last evening, between the hours of 6 and 7 o'clock, a most startling exhibition was seen in the sky of this city. People standing on the sidewalks saw coming through the sky over the housetops what appeared to he an electric arc lamp propel ed by some mysterious force.

It came out of the east and sailed unevenly toward the southwest, dropping now nearer the earth, and now suddenly rising into the air again as if the force that was whirling it though space was sensible of the dangers of col ision with objects upon the earth.

Startled citizens declare that they not only saw the phenomenon, but that they also heard voices issuing from it in mid-air-not the whispering of angels, not the sepulchral mutterings of evil spirits, but the intel igible words and merry laughter of humans.

At those intervals where the glittering object descended dangerously near the housetops, voices were heard in the sky saying: "Lift her up quick. You are making directly for that steeple." Then the light in the sky would be seen obeying some mystic touch and ascending to a considerable height, from which it would take up again its southwesterly course" (1)

Nine days later (on November 26), a similar mystery object appeared over the San Francisco Bay area. According to an eyewitness quoted in a local paper:

"(It) looked like a great black cigar with a fish-like tail. The body was at least 100 feet long, and attached to it was a triangular tail, one apex being attached to the main body. The surface of the airship looked as if it were made of aluminum.

The airship went at tremendous speed. As it neared Lorin, it turned quickly and disappeared in

the direction of San Francisco. At half past 8, we saw it again, when it took about the same direction and disappeared". (2)

The reason the witnesses found these aerial craft so remarkable is that none of them had ever seen anything even remotely like it before. That's because there was no similar vehicle known to exist anywhere in the world in 1896.

Although Germany's Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin was hard at work developing the dirigibles that would bear his name (and which he would successfully fly for the first time in 1900), devices such as those reported in California were years ahead of their time in terms of speed, maneuverability and night flying capabilities. (Heavier-than-air technology was even less farther along. It would be another seven years before the Wright brothers made their first manned flight.) These and other sightings of mystery airships in the skies of the Golden State during the last two months of 1896 were only a curtain raiser for what was to become a national phenomenon the fol owing year.

According to an article in a Nebraska newspaper, an airship was sighted repeatedly around the smal farming community of Hastings in January of 1897, after an earlier appearance that may actual y have predated those in California:

"Several Hastings people report that an airship, or something of the kind, has been sailing around in the air west of this city. It was first noticed sometime last fal , when it was seen floating in the air about 500 feet above the ground. After

standing stil for about 30 minutes, it began to circle about and took a northerly direction for about two miles, after which it returned to its starting place and sank into oblivion.

Since that time, it has not been seen until last Sunday evening, when it was observed standing nearly stil a few miles west of Hastings and seemingly about 800 feet in the air.

At first sight, it had the appearance of an immense star, but after closer observation, the powerful light showed by its color to be artificial. It certainly must be il uminated by powerful electric dynamos, for the light sent forth by it is wonderful.

At 9:30 last Monday night, the large glaring light was seen to circle around for a few minutes, and then descended for about 200 feet, circling as it traveled at a remarkable speed for about two miles.

Then slowing up, it circled for fully 15 minutes, when it began to lower and disappear as mysteriously as it had made its appearance". (3)

A few days later, the same paper reported a detailed sighting by a group of people returning from a prayer meeting about 40 miles south of Hastings, near the border with Kansas:

"It seemed to be conical-shaped, and perhaps 30-to-40 feet in length, with a bright headlight and six smal er lights, three on a side, and seemed to have two sets of wings on a side, with a large fan-shaped rudder". (4)

In April, it was neighboring Kansas' turn to host strange aerial visitors. Thousands of residents craned their necks skyward one evening to watched in amazement as a bright light alternately descended and ascended over Kansas City, as described by a local newspaper at the time:

"The light seemed to be the size of a big streetlight, and didn't seem to be as high as the clouds.

It shot out a beam of light very much like a searchlight. Some of the time the light was white, and then it changed to a bright red.

Its general course was towards the northwest, but several times it reversed and traveled for a while in the opposite direction. It moved with a regular motion, not comet-like. Some said they watched it go out of sight over the northern horizon". (5)

Residents in nearby Everest got a much more detailed look at the evening's visitor during the 80

minutes it flew over their town:

"The basket or car seemed to be 25-to-30 feet long, shaped like an Indian canoe. Four light wings extended from the car, two of which were triangular. A large dark hulk was discernible immediately above the car, and was general y supposed by the watchers to be an inflated gas bag.

That the same power that furnished the light was used for lifting the ship was evident from the fact that the lights grew dim as the ship went upward, and as the ship came nearer the earth, the light was as

bright as the light of a locomotive. One observer claimed a blue color appeared, other than white and red". (6)

A few days later, a farmer in nearby Iowa claimed an uncomfortably close encounter with a mystery airship, as described in a contemporary newspaper account:

"He was tramping about his farm in the moonlight when suddenly, a dark body lighted on each side with a row of what looked like incandescent lamps loomed up some distance to the south of him at a height of perhaps a mile from the ground. He watched it intently until it was directly over his head.

At this point, the skipper evidently decided to turn around. In accomplishing this maneuver, the machine sank considerably. Hibbard did not notice a drag rope with a grapnel attached which dangled from the rear of the car until suddenly, as the machine rose from the ground, it hooked itself firmly in his trousers and shot away again to the south.

Had it risen to any considerable height, the result, Hibbard thinks, would have been disastrous.

Either his weight was sufficient to keep it near terra firma or the operator did not care to ascend to a higher level".

At that moment, the desperate man spotted his salvation in the form of a smal tree:

"Hibbard grabbed it with both hands. Instantly, there was a sound of tearing cloth, and the machine went on with a section of Hibbard's unmentionables".

The newspaper concluded its account of the incident as fol ows:

"He related his experience to several neighbors and despite their grins of incredulity, firmly maintains the truth of the story. Hibbard's reputation for truth has never been bad". (7) As it turns out, a fel ow Hawkeye had his own unnerving close encounter with an airship around the same time. The man, a dairy farmer in the western part of the state, was returning home just after midnight when he noticed a lighted aerial object approaching. He later described the object to a local reporter:

"(It was) a dark bulk, through the windows of which the light shone. (It was a) long, narrow car resembling a corset box in shape, but perhaps 30 or 35 feet in length, and six or seven in width and height. Over this car floated a cigar-shaped bag, horizontaly placed, of about the same length as the car, and eight or 10 feet thick at its greatest diameter".

Any further observation was cut short when the witness' team of horses, apparently spooked by the aerial apparition, suddenly bolted and threw him into a nearby ditch. The man recovered in time to see the object rise and disappear into the darkness. (8)

By mid-April, the state of Michigan had become ground zero for mystery airship visitations. In its April 13 edition, a newspaper in Battle Creek informed its readers:

"What is believed by many to be the much talked of and mysterious airship made itself visible to residents last evening about 8:55 o'clock. In al , some 50 people witnessed the curious sight.

The "ship" when observed appeared to be about two miles west of the city, traveling in a southeasterly course. At first it seemed to be about a mile high, then

suddenly a report was heard which sounded like a gun, sparks flew forth and the ship, which looked to be between 25 and 30 feet in length, commenced to settle down slowly about halfway down to terra firma.

(It) stopped for a few moments, a buzzing sound was heard, sparks again flew forth as from an emery wheel, and the object commenced to slowly raise in an almost perpendicular position. Suddenly, the lights went out on the air monster and it at once became invisible. The time the ship was visible would not exceed five minutes.

The subject of the airship has been the main one under discussion today. While many scoff at the idea of it being an airship, they cannot gainsay the fact that at least a strange phenomenon was seen in the face of so many reputable citizens who observed the sight. If it was not an airship, what was it?" (9) Three nights later, a sizable group of citizens in Hudson, Michigan experienced their own sighting, as reported the next day by an area newspaper:

"Last night about 11 o'clock, a party of 25 people, responsible and worthy of belief, were on their

way from a party to supper. Suddenly, some of the party noticed a strange-looking object in the heavens somewhat toward the west. The knowledge of the discovery was imparted to the rest of the crowd, and for nearly an hour they watched the strange navigator in the sky.

It was evidently the airship, and appeared to be a cigar-shaped object carrying yel ow lights in the bow and stern. The airship seemed to have some sort of mechanical arrangement at the side to propel it, although it did not appear to be wings. At the stern, the spectators seemed to think they saw a steering apparatus.

The airship moved from the west in northerly direction, and was an object of great wonder. At one time it was so close it appeared to be only about 500 feet high. The bright moonlight helped to make the object very plain to view.

The airship is the talk of the city today, and as the party had not indulged in anything stronger than mineral water, their story receives much credence". (10) No mention was made of any liquid consumption by the observers of another mystery aerial object in a different part of the Wolverine State on the fol owing night. The incident was described in a local newspaper:

"About 12:30 this morning, several residents of Bay City returning from a lodge meeting noticed a large object approaching from the south, high up in the air. It was soon apparent that the floating body was not a cloud but was a substantial thing of material existence.

As it approached, it appeared to gradual y lower itself, and when it reached Center Street, it did not seem to be over 50 feet high. There was a red light at either end. It seemed to be traveling at a rapid rate when first seen, but slowed up gradual y as it neared Bay City.

From descriptions given, the airship was from 50 to 75 feet long, (and) perhaps one-third as wide.

It shone with a dull red glow, as if there were lights on the upper side. In shape it was conical, and no mode of propulsion was visible to the terrestrial observers". (11) A little more than two hours after the sighting in Bay City, a pair of policemen on patrol spotted the same (or a similar) object in nearby Saginaw. According to a story in the next day's paper:

"Roundsman Halsey and Patrolman Foley of the police force are sure that they saw the machine.

They were attracted by a noise which sounded like the rattle of a drum. Looking in the direction from which the sound came, the officers saw something which is described by Roundsman Halsey as a cigar-shaped affair about 30 feet long with nothing above it and something hanging about 10 feet below the main body of the thing and carrying a red and yel ow light which seemed to be shining through canvas.

The affair was traveling about 25 miles an hour in a southerly direction". (12) Meanwhile, Michigan's neighbor to the south-Ohio-was busy logging its own share of mystery airship reports.

On the evening of April 14, a farmer was feeding his livestock near Casstown when he heard what at first sounded like a flock of geese flying overhead. Looking up, he saw a huge, bird-shaped object traveling about 150 feet above the ground. The witness later described the object as having wings and a large tail or rudder.

Before the strange visitor disappeared into the gathering dusk, the I farmer heard what sounded like distant music and the sound of a human voice. One of the man's neighbors also heard the sounds, but arrived on the scene too late to view the object itself. (13) The fol owing night, another winged aerial visitor of the inanimate kind put in an appearance over the town of Dunkirk. Two witnesses in a railroad tower said the object flew "so near the earth that you could hear men talking in it." They described the object as the size of a wagon bed, and said it had a wing on each side and a propel er at each end, with a red light in front and a greenish-yel ow light at the back. (14)

That same night, two farmers reported observing a similar object in rural Fairfield County. They said the body was cigar-shaped, and attached to it were two large pairs of what looked like canvas wings.

Ventured one of the witnesses:

"It was inclined at an angle of about 45 degrees, as though a landing had been made at someplace

not very far distant and they were ascending to a point above the lower wind currents". (15) The anomalous aerial activity in the Buckeye State continued unabated the next night when a party of young people in Logan saw a sudden flash of light in the sky and looked up to see a large, dark shape flying slowly over the town. The object was close enough to the ground that the witnesses said they could hear voices coming from it.

Three of the more adventurous members of the group decided to pursue the strange spectre and fol owed it in a buggy. They caught up to it three miles from town, where the object had stopped and descended to within a few feet of the ground.

The trio managed to approach to a point about 50 feet from the thing before it rose swiftly into the air and disappeared into the night. Before it did, the men said they heard voices inside the craft. One witness described the airship as black, approximately 40 feet long and boat-shaped. (16) A somewhat different description was attached to the airship seen at Upper Sandusky a few hours later. According to one witness, it was "40 feet in length, of the shape of an auger and had huge wings like a windmil ." The object, which was reportedly equipped with purple, yel ow and green lights, was observed diving toward earth before regaining altitude and flying off in a northerly direction. (17) Two nights later, a

mystery airship created quite a commotion on the West Virginia side of the Ohio River when it hovered over Sistersvil e and directed bril iant searchlights down on the smal community.

Residents were alerted to the presence of the strange aerial visitor by prolonged blowing of a sawmil whistle, and a number of them got a good look at the object in its reflected light. They later described it as cigar-shaped, and said it had large wings or fins on each side. In addition to the searchlights, witnesses reported the craft carried flashing red, white and green lights on its sides and at each end. Several people who observed the airship from the vantage point of a hil estimated it was approximately 180 feet in length and about 50 feet in diameter at the widest point. (18) In May, a rare 1897 sighting of a mystery airship on the West Coast occurred in a smal town in northeast Washington, as recounted in a news report of the time:

"The town of Marble was greatly excited today over the appearance of an airship. Some men working at the mil discovered it as it appeared over the mountains at the southern part of town, and watched it disappear in a northeasterly direction.

It was in full view, and the fans could easily be recognized. It had an apparatus in front resembling a rotary snowplow that seemed to be revolving rapidly. The whole thing moved very rapidly, and was only a few minutes passing from view.

It was seen by nearly al the mil crew and myself. The citizens were quite worked up over its appearance, having read of the existence of such a machine as an airship. If anyone doubts the authenticity of this, every man in town can vouch for it". (19)

While many airships were reported flying at considerable altitude, some witnesses observed others cruising low enough to glimpse occupants aboard them. Such as in the fol owing incidents, al of which occurred during the month of April 1897.

On the night of the 11tn, a man in Lock Mil s, Indiana claimed he was visited by a man in an airship who projected "magic lantern" pictures on the side of his barn. (Magic lantern was the contemporary name for an early type of slide projector.) (20) On the 19tn, the postmaster of Greenfield, Illinois was walking in the woods when he observed an airship about 150 feet above his head. He said he could see a woman standing on a deck at the front of the craft, catching pigeons with a net. (21)

Later that day, a man discovered something on the ground about nine miles from the scene of the postmaster's sighting. The fol owing message was written on a piece of paper with a printed letterhead reading "Airship Co.,Oakland, Cal.":

"We are having a delightful time and plenty to eat. Mol ie's scheme for running down birds and catching them with a net works excel ently. We feast daily upon pigeon pie.

Since starting out, we have greatly increased the velocity of the ship. The fol owing figures wil

give some idea of the speed which we are now able to make: St. Louis, April 15, 8:30 P.M.; Chicago, same evening, 9:33; Kansas City, one hour and forty minutes later". (22) If this letter came from an airship, and the times cited in it are correct, the craft in question was averaging wel over 200 miles per hour-an unheard-of speed in the 19th Century.

On the evening of the 24th, a man in Louisvil e, Kentucky heard a buzzing noise and looked up to see a cigar-shaped craft about 200 feet in the air. Before the airship flew off to the south, the witness was able to make out the form of a man standing at the stern of the h object: "He looked at me, and I waved my hat. Two other men were I sitting in the helm." (23) The fol owing newspaper story described an incident that occurred in Merkel, Texas on the 25th:

"Some parties returning from church last night noticed a heavy object dragging along with a rope attached. They fol owed it until crossing the railroad it caught on a rail.

On looking up, they saw what they supposed was an airship. It was not near enough to get any idea of dimensions. A light could be seen protruding from several windows. (There was) one bright light in the front like the headlight of a locomotive.

After some ten minutes, a man was seen descending the rope. He came near enough to be plainly seen. He wore a light blue sailor suit (and) was smal in size.

He stopped when he discovered parties at the anchor and cut the rope below him and sailed off in a northeast direction.

The anchor is now on exhibition at the blacksmith shop of El iot and Mil er and is attracting the attention of hundreds of people". (24)

Another contemporary news account told of an incident near Elkton, Kentucky on the 27th:

"Tuesday night about 7 o'clock, as a family living south of town were sitting at the supper table, they were suddenly startled by the furious barking of the ever-faithful watchdog, and as is usual with children, they al rushed out to see what had caused the excitement of the canine.

They al rushed back pel -mel , head-over-heels, exclaiming: "Jack-o' lantern in the sky, Mamma!

Jack-o' lantern in the sky!"

The wiser heads of the family, after close inspection (described seeing) a large, cigar-shaped affair with immense white wings. It was not very high, and the guy ropes and rods could be seen plainly.

Three men were visible, and they frantical y waved their hands as they passed. The machine had a zig-zag course, and seemed to be out of working order". (25) The witnesses to an airship seen in Pennsylvania around the same time had a better opinion of the craft's operational ability, as reported by an area newspaper:

"From Sharon comes the story that the flying machine was seen by reputable persons whose veracity could not be questioned.

They al ege that three men were visible on the machine, which was in the shape of a huge cigar and traveled approximately 2,000 feet above the earth, and seemed to be perfectly under control of the operators". (26)

Then there are the cases where witnesses claimed to have encountered landed airships and their occupants. One of the earliest such incidents occurred in California in December, 1896.

On the evening of the 7th, a woman's cries alerted residents of Camptonvil e to the fact that a large airship was flying over their smal community. When the mysterious craft appeared to land nearby, five local men went to investigate.

According to the men, they found the ship and its sole occupant, a bearded man who appeared to be deaf and mute. One enterprising member of the group decided to try putting questions to their strange visitor in writing.

In response, the aeronaut produced an "alphabet" and spel ed out a message saying he lived in the Montezuma Mountains with his wife and two children. He declined to answer any further questions, so the five men left. The airship was reportedly seen flying off the fol owing day. (27) Each of the fol owing incidents took place during the eventful month of April, 1897: On the 13, a telegraph operator near Girard, Illinois received a message from his counterpart in the

nearby town of Carlinvil e informing him that an airship was headed in his direction. Sure enough, an unknown object soon landed near the railroad tracks, and the telegrapher and three other men set out to get a better look.

The object they discovered was about 100 feet in length and 25 feet wide, with a large letter "M"

on its side. The witnesses managed to catch a glimpse of several occupants in the "control car" before the craft rose vertical y and flew off at high speed in a northerly direction. (28) The same airship may have come down again nearby a couple evenings later when two farm workers claimed they observed an airship land outside Springfield, and a man with a long beard emerged to inquire what place it was. One witness said: "Inside the car was seated another man and also the scientist's wife."

According to the two workers, the bearded occupant told them the airship's crew usual y rested on the ground during the day, and that they had just flown from Quincy to Springfield (a distance of about 75 miles) in 30 minutes. When they asked his name, "he smiled and pointed to the letter 'M' which was painted on the side of the car."

The aeronaut then declared that he would "make a report to the government when Cuba is declared free." (That island was then waging a rebel ion to gain independence from Spain. There were a number of reported statements by other airship occupants expressing a desire to aid the Cubans in their struggle.)

At the conclusion of their conversation, the bearded man entered the craft and pressed a button, and the airship sailed away. (29)

Meanwhile, on the 14th, two men on a fishing boat spotted what they at first assumed was another ship on Lake Erie near Cleveland. It was about 40 feet long with a canopy, and they could see a young man fishing from the deck of the object. The man wore a hunting jacket and cap, and near him were a woman and a child of about 10.

When the men got nearer, the other craft suddenly deployed a large, colored "bal oon" and rose up to a height of approximately 500 feet, where it reportedly circled "like a hawk" before flying off. (30) On the 15th, an airship flew over Lynn Grove, Iowa in mid-morning and appeared to land just outside town. Several local men went to investigate, as reported by a newspaper shortly afterwards:

"They saw what appeared to be an airship alight on the Jones farm, four miles north of town. But when they were within 700 yards of it, it arose and started toward the north. Two bags of bal ast were thrown out, and these are now at Robertson Campbel 's drugstore.

The men who chased the ship are certain there were two men on board. They said the object had four wings. Every citizen of Lynn Grove saw the object as it sailed over the town, and there has been great excitement al day". (31)

One of the most remarkable al eged encounters with landed airship occupants is said to have taken place in neighboring Missouri the next day. The witness was a 50-year-old traveling agent for a company dealing in steam boiler inspections and insurance. His story was related in great detail by a St. Louis newspaper at the time:

"I was wandering through the hil s east of Springfield, Missouri, and coming to the brow of a hil overlooking a smal clearing in a val ey a short distance below me, I saw a sight that rooted me to the spot with amazement for some time. I could not believe my eyes at first, and shook myself to see if I was not dreaming.

There in the clearing rested a vessel similar in outline to the airship shown in the Post-Dispatch a few days ago. Near the vessel was the most beautiful being I ever beheld. She was rather under medium size, but of the most exquisite form and features such as would put to shame the forms as sculptured by the ancient Greeks.

She was dressed in nature's garb and her golden hair, wavy and glossy, hung to her waist, unconfmed excepting by a band of glistening jewels that bound it back

from her forehead. The jewels threw out rays of light as she moved her head.

She was plucking the little flowers that were just blossoming from the sod, with exclamations of

delight and in a language I could not understand. Her voice was like low, silvery bel s and her laughter rang out like their chimes. In one hand she carried a fan of curious design that she fanned herself vigorously with, though to me the air was not warm and I wore an overcoat.

In the shade of the vessel lay a man of noble proportions and majestic countenance. His hair of dark auburn fel to his shoulders in wavy masses and his full beard, of the same color but lighter in shade, reached to his breast. He was also fanning himself with a curious fan as if the heat oppressed him.

After gazing for a while, I moved forward, and the woman, hearing the rustle of leaves, looked around. A moment she stood looking at me with wonder and astonishment in her beautiful blue eyes.

Then, with a shriek of fear, she rushed to the man, who sprung to his feet, threw his arm around her, and glared at me in a threatening manner.

I stopped and, taking my handkerchief from my pocket, waved it in the air. A few minutes we stood. I then spoke some words of apology for intruding, but he seemed not to understand, and replied in a threatening tone and words which I could not make out.

I tried by signs to make him understand, and final y he left her, trembling and trying to hold him back, and came toward me. I extended my hand. He looked at it for a moment, astonishment depicted in his dark brown eyes, and final y he extended his own and touched mine. I took his and carried it to my lips.

I tried by signs to make them understand I meant no harm. Final y, his face lighted up with pleasure, and he turned and spoke to the woman. She came hesitatingly forward, her form undulating with exquisite grace. I took her hand and kissed it fervently. The color rose to her cheeks, and she drew it hastily away.

I asked them by signs where they came from, but it was difficult to make them understand.

Final y, they seemed to do so and smiling, they gazed upwards for a moment, as if looking for some particular point, and then pointed upwards, pronouncing a word which to my imagination sounded like

"Mars."I pointed to the ship and expressed my wonder in my countenance. He took me by the hand and led me towards it. In the side was a smal door. I looked in. There was a luxurious couch covered with robes of the most beautiful stuff and texture, such as I had never seen before.

From the ceiling was suspended a curious bal , from which extended a strip of metal, which he struck to make it vibrate. Instantly, the bal was il uminated with a soft, white light which lit up the whole interior. It was most beautifully decorated with scenes such as I had never seen before.

At the stern was another large bal of metal supported in a strong framework and connected to the shaft of the propel er. A similar mechanism attached to each propel er and smal er bal s attached to a point of metal that extended from each side of the vessel and from the prow. Connected to each bal was a thin strip of metal similar to the lamp.

He struck each one, and when they vibrated, the bal s commenced to revolve with intense rapidity, and did not cease til he stopped them with a kind of brake. As they revolved, intense lights stronger than any arclight I ever saw shone out from the points at the sides and at the prow. The one at the prow was white, on one side was green and the other red.

The two had been examining me with the greatest curiosity in the meantime. They felt my clothing, looked at my gray hair with surprise, and examined my watch with the greatest wonder. Signs are poor medium to exchange ideas, and therefore we could express but little.

I pointed to the bal s attached to the propel ers. He gave each of the strips of metal a rap, those attached to the propel ers under the vessel first. The bal s began to revolve rapidly, and I felt the vessel begin to rise. I sprang out, and none too soon, for the vessel rose as lightly as a bird and shot away like an arrow. In a few minutes, it was out of sight. The two stood laughing and waving their hands to me, she a vision of loveliness and he of manly vigor". (32)

Before writing this incredible tale off as a romantic fabrication or vivid hal ucination, consider the fact that the newspaper checked with the witness'

employer before publishing the man's letter and got the fol owing reaction:

"Strange as it seems, I am compel ed to believe it. Mr. Hopkins is not a romancer. He never courts notoriety. He does not drink a drop. He has been connected with this company for a long time, and is most reliable. What he writes you can publish as being absolutely true". (33) In addition, Mr. Hopkins' wife, grown daughters and several of his coworkers al attested to his past veracity. (34)

Around the same time, some Illinois farmers were considerably less rhapsodic in describing their encounter with the occupants of a landed airship. A contemporary newspaper gave this bare bones account of the incident:

"Some stockmen claim that the ship had a breakdown near Elburn and came down for repairs.

These farmers came across it and found that two men occupied it. The machine apparently weighed about 500 pounds and was made of some light substance like aluminum.

They conversed with the men, but learned little. The men said they were going from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast and were fol owing the Northwestern railway". (35) On the 17, a prison official in Texas witnessed activity aboard a landed airship without glimpsing the individuals responsible. He first observed the object through binoculars as it hovered above a gang of convicts working in a field. He said it resembled a large "whaleback ship" with wings and fins attached to its body.The witness heard a distinct humming noise as the craft landed near a lake on the farm. Once on the ground, a series of colored banners or flags were displayed and streaks of dazzling white light shot from the ship. After a few minutes of this, the airship suddenly rose rapidly and flew out of sight. (36) The airship crew that turned up in Conroe, Texas that night was more sociable. Three strangers strol ed into the town restaurant around midnight saying they'd landed their airship in order to get a meal

"by way of a change." They told the owner and three other local customers present that they were flying from San Francisco to Cuba.

The leader offered to let the four witnesses examine the airship, but they declined. About an hour after the strangers finished their meal and departed, citizens of Conroe observed a brightly-lit airship fly over the town. (37)

A man in neighboring Arkansas was more receptive to the idea of examining a landed airship near Texarkana about a week later. The witness, who was a judge, gave the fol owing account of the incident to a local newspaper:

"I was down on McKinney Bayou looking after the surveying of a tract of land and, in passing through a thicket to an open space, saw a strange-looking object anchored to the ground. On approaching, I found it to he the airship I have read so much about of late.

It was manned by three men who spoke a foreign language, but judging from their looks, (I) would take them to be Japs. They saw my astonishment and beckoned me to fol ow them. And on complying, I was shown through the ship.

The language barrier evidently prevented the judge from learning much about the craft, but he concluded that it was made of aluminum and "the gas to raise and lower the monster was pumped into an aluminum tank when the ship was to be raised, and let out when to be lowered." (38) The two Caucasian crewmen of an airship that landed near Stephensvil e, Texas a few days later were less accommodating about providing tours of their vehicle. Word spread quickly when the ship landed on a farm three miles outside town, and soon a large group of local residents converged on the spot.

They found a 60-foot-long, cigar-shaped object manned by two men who identified themselves as S.E. Til man and A.E. Dolbear. The duo said they were testing the craft for some New York financiers.

When several of the locals asked to examine the airship, the pilots I declined their request. They then proceeded to board the craft and fly away. (39)

The high incidence of encounters with airship occupants in the Texas-Arkansas area continued with the publication of the fol owing newspaper account of a meeting said to have occurred near the town of Homan, Arkansas:

"Capt. Jim Hooton, the wel -known Iron Mountain railroad conductor, verified the report that he

has seen the airship. Those who know Mr. Hooton wil vouch for the truth of his statement:

"As I was tramping through the brush, my attention was attracted by a familiar sound, a sound for al the world like the working of an air pump on a locomotive. I went at once in the direction of the sound, and there in an open space I saw the object making the noise.

To say that I was astonished would but feebly express my feelings. I decided at once that this was the famous airship seen by so many people about the country.

There was a medium-sized man aboard, and I noticed that he was wearing smoked glasses. He was tinkering around what seemed to be the back end of the ship. As I approached, I was too dumbfounded to speak.

He looked at me in surprise and said, 'Good day, sir, good day.' I asked, 'Is this the airship?' He replied, 'Yes, sir.' Whereupon three or four other men came out of what was apparently the keel of the ship.

A close examination showed that the keel was divided into two parts terminating in front like the sharp edge of a knife. In fact, the entire front end of the ship terminated in a knife-like edge, while the sides of the ship bulged gradual y toward the middle and then receded. There were three large wheels upon each side made of some bending metal and arranged so that they became concave as they moved forward.'I beg your pardon, sir,' I said. 'The noise sounds a good deal like a Westinghouse air brake.'

'Perhaps it does, my friend. We are using condensed air and aeroplanes. But you wil know more later on.'

'Al ready, sir' someone cal ed out, and the party al disappeared below. I observed that just in front of each wheel a two-inch tube began to spurt air on the wheels and they commenced revolving. The ship gradual y arose with a hissing sound. The areoplanes suddenly sprang forward, turning their sharp ends skyward.

Then the rudders at the end of the ship began to veer to one side, and the wheels revolved so fast that one could scarcely see the blades. In less time than it takes to tel you, the ship had gone out of sight." (40)

One of the last al eged encounters with occupants during the 1897 wave of mystery airship incidents was also among the most revealing. It, too, occurred in the state of Arkansas, near Hot Springs.

The two witnesses, a constable and a deputy sheriff who were investigating some recent reports of cattle rustling in the area, provided the fol owing account of their experience:

"While riding northwest from this city on the night of May 6, 1897, we noticed a bril iant light high in the heavens. After riding four or five miles around through the hil s, we again saw the light, which appeared to be much nearer the earth.

We stopped our horses and watched it coming down, until al at once it disappeared behind a hil .

We rode on about half a mile further, when our horses refused to go farther.

Almost a hundred yards distant, we saw two persons moving around with lights. Drawing our Winchesters, we demanded, "Who is that, and what are you doing?"

A man with a long, dark beard came forth with a lantern in his hand, and on being informed who we were, proceeded to tel us that he and two others-a young man and a woman-were traveling though the country in an airship.

We could plainly distinguish the outlines of the vessel, which was cigar-shaped and almost 60 feet long, and looking just like the (sketches) that have appeared in the papers recently.

The young man was filing a big sack with water about 30 yards away. The woman was holding an umbrel a over her head. The man with the whiskers invited us to take a ride, saying that he could take us where it was not raining. We told him we preferred to get wet.

Asking the man why the bril iant light was turned on and off so much, he replied that the light was so powerful that it consumed a great deal of his motive power.

He said he would like to stop off in Hot Springs for a few days and take the hot baths, but his time was limited and he could not. He said that they were going to wind up at Nashvil e, Tennessee after

thoroughly seeing the country.

Being in a hurry, we left. Upon our return about 40 minutes later, nothing was to be seen. We did not hear or see the airship when it departed". (41) This was just

one of a number of reported meetings with airship occupants that transpired when the crews of the craft landed for supplies. Here are some others, al of which reportedly occurred during April of 1897.

Sometime early that month, a boy living near the town of Norway, Wisconsin swore he saw an airship land on a local farm. He said he observed several occupants emerge from the craft and procure water, which they proceeded to pour into what looked like a boiler on board the ship. (42) Water was also evidently on the mind of the uncommunicative airship occupant encountered by three men in Lexington, Kentucky on the I evening of April 17 . They told of observing a man about 40

years old disembark from the craft and fil a bucket with water from a stream. The witnesses attempted to engage the man in conversation, but he refused to reply to their questions and promptly flew off. (43) That same evening, an airship landed at a feed mil near Upland, Indiana, and a heavyset man with long whiskers emerged and purchased some cattle feed. Upon reentering his vehicle, the pilot was, observed pressing a button, which resulted in the ship rising into the air and flying away. (44) A different kind of take off control was observed by an Indiana farmer when an airship landed on his property near Muncie one night around the same time. According to an account in a local newspaper:

"One of the occupants stepped from the car attached to the ship and I asked for some milk. After receiving a pail full, the man pulled on a cord and it flew off". (45) An al eged meeting with an airship crew in Harrisburg, Arkansas on the night of April 21st yielded more revealing details about the craft's operation. The witness, an ex-senator, was roused from his sleep by a noise outside his bedroom and peered outside. He was amazed to see an airship land and four occupants - an elderly man with a long beard, two younger men and a woman-disembark and begin drawing water from his wel .

More curious than angry, the witness went outside and spoke with the senior member of the quartet. He learned that the ship was operated by anti-gravity, a secret the old man said he had acquired from his late uncle:

"Weight is no object to me. I suspend al gravity by placing a smal wire around an object. I was making preparations to go over to Cuba and kil off the Spanish army if hostilities had not ceased. But now my plans are changed, and I may go to the aid of the Armenians.

When the witness politely declined the offer of a test ride, the crew boarded the airship and it flew off". (46)

The prospect of a ride in an airship also figured in an incident al eged to have occurred in neighboring Texas the fol owing night.

The incident began when an oblong-shaped craft with a bright lights and wings circled a farm near Rockland and then came in for a landing. The farmer went to investigate and was met by an "ordinary mortal" who addressed the witness:

"I want some lubricating oil and a couple of cold chisels if you can get them, and some bluestones. I suppose the saw mil hard by has the two former articles and the telegraph operator the bluestone. Here is a ten-dol ar bil . Take it and get up these articles, and keep the change for your troubles".

The farmer agreed to secure the items requested. But before setting off on his errand, he asked if he could examine his visitor's airship, which was sitting about 30 yards away. To which the visitor replied:

"No, we cannot permit you to approach any nearer. But do as we request and your kindness wil be appreciated. We wil cal on you some future day and reciprocate your kindness by taking you on a trip". The newspaper account from which these details were taken didn't say what the farmer's reaction was to the offer of a ride in the airship, but he hurried off to round up the desired items. He managed to get the oil and chisels, but not the bluestones. When he returned, the visitor thanked him and shook his

hand. The farmer asked the stranger his origin and destination, to which the man replied: "We wil be in Greece day after tomorrow." Then the aeronaut boarded his craft, there was a whirring sound and it flew off at a rapid speed. (47)

If the witness heard correctly, and the aeronaut was referring to the nation of Greece, this would represent a journey of more than 7,000 miles - requiring an average non-stop airspeed of about 160 miles per hour to accomplish in two days' time.)

While most of the people who were offered rides in mystery airships said "no thanks," there were al egedly a few adventurous exceptions.

During the 1896 California prequel to the great nationwide airship wave of 1897, several residents of the Golden State claimed to have been taken on airship rides. Among them was a sailor who said he was given a flight by a Spanish-speaking airship pilot and a female companion one night near San Luis Obispo. (48)

Elsewhere, the fol owing item appeared in the April 16,1897 issue of a newspaper in Bluffton, Indiana:

"Great excitement was created here last night about six o'clock by the appearance of a strange spectacle in the west. Our entire vil age turned out in full force and saw approaching a long, cigar-shaped boat sailing through me air about four miles high. It was going at the rate of about 30 miles ah hour, and final y settled in our little vil age.

There were two men and a boy in the boat. One of them seemed to be the proprietor, and bossed the others around like he was paying them $6 a week and board.

After the crowd had talked to the three men for an hour, they invited Mose Spake and other prominent members of the fire department to take a ride, and carried them about three miles and then brought them back.

After letting our citizens out, the men lighted three lanterns - a red one, a white one and a blue one - and sailed away towards Camden. Some of the fel ows got on bicycles and rigs, but couldn't keep up with the ship". (49)

On the evening of May 4, three bicyclists in Jenny Lind, Arkansas were more successful in catching up with the airship that flew over their community. They found it landed next to a spring about three miles from town, and engaged the craft's two male occupants in conversation. The airship pilots, who gave their names as George Autzerlitz and Joseph Eddleman, said they dined on birds they overtook and captured in the air.

The aeronauts offered to take any one of the three men for a ride in their ship. One man was chosen, and he reportedly enjoyed a flight to the town of Huntington, about 15 miles away. (50) Another way witnesses frequently came into close contact with the occupants of mystery airships was when the craft landed for repairs. The fol owing incidents were al reported during the month of April, 1897.

In the early hours of the 6th, a man was rounding up some stray cattle near Peru, Nebraska when his attention was drawn to a light on a smal island in the Missouri River. Venturing nearer, he discovered the source was an airship which, according to the vessel's crew, had landed to repair a searchlight.

According to a contemporary account of the incident in an area newspaper:

"It is cigar-shaped, about 200 feet long and 50 feet across at the widest point, gradual y narrowing to a point at both ends. At each end of the ship is a large, steel snail shel -shaped device. This, he was informed, was the apparatus by which the strange machine was propel ed. Large gasoline engines caused whichever one of these was in use to revolve rapidly and to bore into the air, dragging or pulling the ship along at a wonderful rate of speed.

Mr. Southard was al owed to examine as much as he pleased, and al his questions were answered".

The crew told the witness that "the craft is loaded with several tons of dynamite, and is bound for Cuba." (51)

Nine days later (on the 15th), an identical scenario was acted out near Cisco, Texas, when a man

came upon a landed airship approximately 200 feet long and crewmen in the process of repairing a searchlight. As in the earlier Nebraska incident, the witness was told that the craft was bound for Cuba with a load of dynamite. (52)

Also on the 15th, an airship crew apparently decided to kil two birds with one stone when they stopped both to make repairs and reprovision at Pine Lake, Michigan. According to an article in a Lansing newspaper:

"A dispatch from Wil iam Megiveron confirms that the airship was seen at Pine Lake Thursday night. He was awakened by a tap on his window and the glare of a light that at first blinded him. On stepping out into the night, he was accosted by a voice from above, which told him that the light was from the airship, that during the afternoon the ship had been lying concealed behind a bank of clouds over the lake and that a stray shot from the gun of some duck hunter had injured one of the ship's wings, and they were lying for repairs.

Wil iam then says that he was directed to prepare four dozen egg sandwiches and a kettle of coffee for the crew. When prepared, the provender was hoisted on board and paid for in Canadian quarters.

Wil iam further states that the aerial monster appeared about 300 feet above the lake, but only the outlines were visible on account of the bril iant searchlight which made everything below as bright as day.

The light reflected so strongly on the lake it was no trouble for the occupants to pick out the biggest and best fish in the lake with a long-handled spear.

He observed a red light at each end. Just before daylight, the ship sailed off toward the city. The whirr of machinery was plainly discernible for several moments". (53) Around this same time, a newspaper in Chattanooga, Tennessee informed its readers that several

"presumably truthful" local citizens had encountered an airship which had landed for repairs:

"(They) came upon the vessel resting on a spur of a mountain near this city. Two men were at work on it and explained that they had been compel ed to return to earth because the machinery was out of order.One of the men said that his name was Professor Charles Davidson. He is aleged to have said that the vessel left Sacramento a month ago and had been sailing al over the country". (54) In other incidents involving mystery airships landing for repairs, an electrician in Chil icothe, Missouri reported that a stranger woke him in the middle of the night and escorted him to a nearby airship to assist in recharging its fuel supply, and a railway worker said he helped the crew of an airship fix a faulty steering mechanism near Nora, Illinois. (55)

If some other 1897 reports were accurate, a few mystery airships never made it safely down for repairs, crashing instead.

Consider, for example, the fol owing contemporary newspaper account of events surrounding an incident said to have occurred near Kalamazoo, Michigan on the night of April 12th:

"People of Pavilion have made some startling reports. And, if true, the much talked of airship was not only a reality, but is now a thing of the past.

George W. Somers and Wil iam Chadburn claim to have seen the ship on Monday evening, when they remained up until a late hour in attendance upon a sick horse. The descriptions given by them are somewhat at variance, but both agree in the assertion that the apparition was il uminated at both ends and moved through space with wonderful rapidity.

They had scarcely time for their observation when a dull explosion was heard, and the object disappeared. They declare the report to have been like that of heavy ordnance, and to have been immediately succeeded by a distant sound of projectiles flying through the air.

Mr. and Mrs. Wal ace say they heard the explosion distinctly, but thought it was thunder. But the discoveries of the morning are sufficient to establish the veracity of the two actual observers.

In one place, two miles from Scotts, there was found a large coil of heavy wire, evidently a part of some electrical appliance. At another point, a propel er blade of some very light material was discovered in a partial y-fused condition.

Three men engaged in shingling a barn in Comstock Township affirm that upon resuming work in

the morning fol owing the occurrence, they found their completed work covered with minute fragments which had in some instances penetrated the shingles and entered the boards beneath". (56) An airship seen near Battle Creek in the adjacent county the fol owing night seems merely to have lost a part and kept on flying, as described in a newspaper account from the time:

"A wel -to-do farmer who resides five miles northeast of this city claims to have found the wheel of the al eged airship that passed over lower Michigan Tuesday night.

George Parks, ofPennfield, and his wife were crossing a field when their attention was drawn to a very bright object that appeared to be about 100 feet from earth and swiftly approaching. Mr. Parks thought from its light and the humming sound it made that it was a meteor. As it passed over them a little to their left, a part of it fel to earth and buried itself in the ground. Mrs. Parks, who was somewhat frightened, would not let her husband go near where it fel .

The next morning, Mr. Parks and his brother, Benjamin, dug it up and found it to be a large wheel made of aluminum, about three feet in diameter and a turbine in shape.

Mr. Parks says it is the first time he ever heard of a meteor having wheels. He wil keep the wheel as a memento, and it may be seen at any time at his farm in Pennfield". (57) Earlier that same month, a man wrote a letter to a Missouri newspaper claiming to have seen an airship strike a flagpole and crash near the town of Bethany. According to the witness, the bodies of the two occupants were mangled beyond recognition. But he said they had letters on them that suggested they may have been from either San Francisco or Omaha. (58)

A few days later, a farmer in neighboring Illinois trumped that story when he claimed an airship crashed on his farm near Lanark during a blizzard. He said two of its occupants were kil ed in the crash, but he managed to pull a third individual from the wreckage alive. The injured survivor was reportedly dressed "after the fashion of the Greeks in the time of Christ" and said he was from Mars.

The enterprising farmer was said to have charged his curious neighbors a dol ar apiece to view the

"Martian" until the visitor recovered from his injuries, repaired his craft and flew off. (59) Despite such suggestions that the mystery airships came from an alien culture, the most widely held opinion at the time involved an earthly origin. The so-cal ed secret inventor scenario postulated that some person or persons in the United States managed to make an unheralded breakthrough in the field of manned flight. In fact, people claiming to have invented an airship - or in some cases representing a person who did - date from the earliest days of the phenomenon.

On November 17, 1896, the text of a remarkable telegram was printed in a Sacramento newspaper. The sender claimed to be an entrepreneur from New York who planned to fly an airship of his invention to California, a trip he estimated would take two days. The same evening the story appeared, the first airship sightings were reported in the skies over Sacramento. (60) Five days later (on November 22), in an article appearing in a San Francisco newspaper, a local lawyer claimed to know the identity of the individual behind the mystery airship:

"It is perfectly true that there is at last a successful airship in existence. I have known of this affair for some time, and am acting as attorney for the inventor. He

is a very wealthy man who has been studying the subject of flying machines for 15 years, and who came here seven years ago from the state of Maine in order to be able to perfect his ideas away from the eyes of other inventors.

I saw the machine one night last week at the inventor's invitation. It is made of metal, is about 150 feet long and is built to carry 15 persons. It is built on the aeroplane system, and has two canvas wings 18 feet wide and a rudder shaped like a bird's tail.

The inventor climbed into the machine, and after he had been moving some of the mechanism for a moment, I saw the thing begin to ascend from the Earth very gently. The machine was under perfect control al the time.

When it got to a height of about 90 feet, the inventor shouted to me that he was going to make a series of circles and then descend. He immediately did so, beginning by making a circle about 100 yards in diameter, and gradual y narrowing until the machine got within 30 feet of the ground. It then fel straight down, very gracefully, touching the Earth as lightly as a fal ing leaf."

The lawyer claimed the airship was being kept hidden outside San Francisco under armed guard until it could be patented by its inventor, who turned out to be a former dentist from Carmel, Maine by the name of E. H. Benjamin. But then things took a confusing turn.

The lawyer retracted his initial statements and now said that while he had indeed been contacted by the al eged inventor, he (the lawyer) hadn't actual y seen the man's invention in person.

Next, the first lawyer was replaced as the inventor's spokesman by a second lawyer, who issued his own statement in which he claimed there were actual y two airships under development, one on the East Coast and the other on the West Coast:

"I have been concerned with the eastern invention for some time personal y. The idea is to consolidate both interests.

From what I have seen of it, I have not the least doubt that it wil carry four men and 1,000

pounds of dynamite. I am quite convinced that two or three men could destroy the city of Havana in 48

hours". He added that "if the Cubans would give him $10 milion, he would wipe out the Spanish stronghold." There's no indication the insurgents ever took him up on his explosive offer.

Although he never claimed to have seen it himself, this second spokesman offered additional details about the airship. He said it was constructed of aluminum, was cylindrical in shape and had wings. It ascended and descended through the use of a gas-fil ed bal oon, and used a motor powered by electric storage batteries to reach a speed of 50 miles per hour in level flight.

In time, al such pronouncements from the al eged inventor and his spokesmen ceased, and no airship was ever produced for public inspection. (61)

Meanwhile, another story claiming to reveal the truth behind the airship mystery appeared in a San Francisco newspaper in the form of the fol owing letter:

"The mysterious light mentioned in your paper this morning as seen by several citizens in different parts of the state is nothing more than an airship, and of this fact I am perfectly cognizant.

I think now that I am released from my obligation of secrecy, which I have kept for nearly three months, as the experiment in aerial navigation is a fixed fact and the public have seen its workings in the air.

In the latter part of August, I was hunting in the Tamalpais range of mountains between the high peak and Bolinas Bay. I wounded a deer, and in chasing it I ran into a circular brush pile about 10 feet in height in a part of the mountain seldom visited even by hunters.

My curiosity prompted me to approach it. I encountered a man who sang out: "What are you doing here, and what do you want?" I replied that I had wounded a deer and was chasing it. He said: "I wil assist you in finding it as we need a little meat in camp."

This man went with me and found my deer. We carried it into the brush corral. And what a sight-a perfect machine shop and an almost completed ship. I was sworn to secrecy, and have kept it until this moment.

Six men were at work on the aerial ship. It is this ship that people have seen at night on its trial trip. It returns to its home before daylight, and wil continue to do so until perfected". (62) Then, on December 2nd, two men claimed yet another accidental encounter with a landed airship and its crew near San Francisco. The pair was fishing about 15 miles north of Pacific Grove when they watched an amazing scene unfold before their eyes.

An airship suddenly descended from the sky and landed on the ocean surface nearby. They observed its three occupants guide the craft to shore and haul it into the woods. The curious fishermen fol owed in their boat, but were met on the beach by one of the airship occupants, who ordered them to leave.

The fishermen persisted, however, and were soon led into the woods, where they were addressed by the occupant who appeared to be in charge:

"I suppose your curiosity has been aroused by our rather unusual method of traveling. I am not yet ready to make my discovery known to the public, but hope to be able to do so as soon as some slight

changes are made in its construction. Until such time, I must refuse to al ow anyone to make a close inspection. You are welcome to get such a view of the ship as you can from a distance".

The witnesses said they watched the airship crew perform repairs and joined them for a meal from the craft's wel -stocked larder before returning to their fishing. (63) Five days later (on December 7tn), this letter appeared in a Fresno newspaper:

"It is true the airship is in Fresno County. Just where I do not know myself. It is also true that the man who was in here a short time ago is one of the inventors.

He told me that the trip to this country was involuntary. They were flying around Contra Costa County (when) suddenly the airship struck a current of air and refused to answer its steering gear. It was borne rapidly southward until the current of air seemed to lessen and the machine once more became manageable. (They) descended and look{ed) for a hiding place, which they at length found.

My friend has told me that the airship was made principal y of aluminum, and that the rising and fal ing was accomplished by improved aeroplanes. The motive power was electricity. He says that the machine is perfect except for the fact that

at times it refuses to steer in a given direction and that it wil not stand stil in the air.

It has gone to San Francisco, and wil return with some material and men, probably tonight. He said if the news from Washington was satisfactory, he would bring his airship over to Fresno where everyone could see it". (64)

Some possible corroboration of the letter writer's story came from five residents of nearby Watertown who said they'd seen a large airship with an "intensely bril iant" light just miss striking the top of the town's post office on the night before his claimed encounter with the airship captain. (65) In the months that fol owed, additional reports of al eged airship inventors surfaced in other parts of the country as wel .

In April of 1897, a rabbi learned that an airship had landed on a farm near Beaumont, Texas and went to investigate. He discovered a winged craft about 150 feet long, and later recounted:

"I spoke to one of the men when he went into the farmer's house and shook hands with him. I did hear him say where it was built, but I can't remember the name of the place or the name of the inventor.

He said that they had been traveling a great deal, and were testing the machine. I was so dumbfounded that I could not frame an intel igent question to ask". (66) That same month, the occupants of one airship may have furnished some information about themselves in writing. According to a newspaper story datelined Appleton, Wisconsin:

"Many persons in this city declare that they saw an airship pass over the city last Sunday night.

Last night, on the farm of N.B. Clark, north of the city, a letter was picked up attached to an iron rod 18

inches long sticking in the ground. The letter, which was not signed, is as fol ows:

"Aboard the Airship Pegasus, April 9,1897 - The problem of aerial navigation has been solved.

The writers have spent the past month cruising about in the airship 'Pegasus' and have demonstrated to their entire satisfaction that the ship is a thorough success. We have been able to attain a speed of 150

miles an hour, and have risen to a height of 2,500 feet above sea level.

The 'Pegasus' was erected at a secluded point 10 miles from Lafayette, Tenn., and the various parts of the machine were carried overland from Glasgow, Ky. to that point, being shipped from Chicago, Pittsburgh and St. Louis. We have made regular trips of three days each from Lafayette to Yaukon, and no harm has come to the 'Pegasus' thus far.

Within a month, our application for the patents for a paral el plane airship wil be filed simultaneously at Washington and the European capitals. The ship is propel ed by steam and is lighted by electricity, and has a carrying power of 1,000 pounds." (67) Interestingly, this wasn't the only al eged communication from an aerial vehicle identifying itself by the name Pegasus. Two weeks after the first message was supposedly written and dropped over Wisconsin, the fol owing item appeared in a newspaper in Newport, Kentucky:

"Numerous reports were rife in Newport Saturday that the airship had been seen passing over Newport Friday at 8 p.m. Mrs. Pil ing says she saw the ship. It was cigar-shaped, and showed a bright

light. Miss L. Remme found in her yard Saturday morning a little muslin bag filed with sand containing a note which read: 'Passed over Newport at 40 miles an hour. Traveled 200 miles since 4:30 Friday afternoon. Expect to be in Nashvil e Sunday at 3:30. CAPTAIN PEGASUS.'" (68) Around the same time, a note al egedly dropped by a differently-named airship was reportedly found by a "prominent townsman" of Lorain, Ohio. It was inside an envelope marked: "Aboard the Airoia, April 22,1897." According to a newspaper account at the time:

"In the letter, the writer stated that the ship was built in an obscure place near Santa Fe, New Mexico, from which place the journey began.

"We have hovered over every state in the union," continued the writer, "fished in the great lakes, crossed the plains and settled on mountains and val eys."

He states that the ship is 82 feet in length and 19 feet wide, supported by a bal oon 35 feet in diameter. A wheel at the stern, he states, is propel ed by means of a storage battery, the wheel having eight paddles.

He claims that himself, wife and child are the only persons aboard the ship. The writer says they wil return in a few days to New Mexico, where a larger boat is under construction, with which he hopes to cross the sea. He signs the name of Wil iam R. Harris". (69) The state of Nebraska proved particularly fertile ground for such stories, seemingly becoming almost a matter of regional pride judging from the speculation of newspapers in the area in 1897.

According to one paper in Omaha:

"During the past few months, there have been several reports regarding an individual in the state who is working on an airship. The inventor has been located somewhere near Hastings, but he has succeeded in keeping his identity pretty wel concealed. They say he does not want his airship invention stolen by unprincipled individuals". (70)

Not to be outdone in the promotion of regional aeronautical accomplishments, another Omaha newspaper told its readers:

"The indications are that John O. Preast of this county is the author of the mysterious machine.

Preast is a unique character, spending his time at his country residence near Omaha experimenting with airships, constructing models and studying al the subjects incidental to the theories of applied mechanics along the line of providing a vessel that wil propel itself through the air.

He has consumed the past 10 years in this way, and the wal s of his home are covered with drawings of queer-shaped things, some resembling giant birds, while others look like a big cigar, al of which he says represent models of airships.

He is a man of superior education. He came to Omaha from Germany 20 years ago, and has lived the life of a recluse. Mr. Preast refuses to admit that the ship reported in different sections of the state is his invention, but some time since he told several persons that he would surprise the world with a working model in 1897.

The two times in the past week that the light has been seen at Omaha, it disappeared near Preast's home, hovering over the place and then appearing to go out". (71) Another individual in the Cornhusker State was less reticent about claiming to have achieved manned flight. The fol owing letter, signed by someone named Anton Pal ardy, appeared in a newspaper in the town of Beatrice:

"The airship which has been seen over Grand island, Hastings and Beatrice is no myth. It is a reality.

Where it was built I dare not tel you. Your readers know that to the northwest of Nebraska is a weird, lonely and strange country known as the Mauvais Terres. There are canyons, caverns, nooks and crannies in these badlands that are so secret and remote from the ordinary pathways that men can live there uninterruptedly for years. It is from these Mauvais Terres that the airship comes.

With my three companions, I have sailed over Nebraska in a line from the forks of the Platte, along the Little Blue Val ey and thence to Manhattan, Kansas, general y at night, returning to the

Mauvais Terres in the early morning.

For prudential reasons, I dare not describe our ship in detail to you. Those who have seen it know its general appearance to be something like a very large umbrel a with a transparent covering". (72) One of the most vocal claimants to the title of airship inventor was a successful Midwestern manufacturer named Edward J. Pennington. He invented the first bal oon tire for motorcycles and machines for woodworking, and produced pulleys, freight elevators and milk separating equipment. In 1890, Pennington established a company in Mt. Carmel, Illinois to manufacture a four-cylinder engine

"for the propulsion of an aerial vessel." (73)

According to Pennington, his airship would be 200 feet long and made of aluminum, with fold-out wings. Lift would be provided by hydrogen gas, and a large propel er powered by a gasoline engine would enable the craft to generate tops speeds up to 250 miles per hour. (74) In 1891, Pennington began demonstration flights of an unmanned 30-foot model of his proposed airship inside a Chicago exhibition hal . The tethered craft circled at a height of 25 feet and attained a speed of six miles per hour.

These performances were a big hit with the public, as a local newspaper observed at the time:

"At the close of each demonstration, the enthusiasm is spontaneous and earnest, and loud applause resounds throughout the vast hal .

One who can work up a scheme whereby 500 to 1,000 people per day are induced to separate themselves from 25 cents to see an airship which resembles an exaggerated link of sausage traveling a limited circuit of 100 feet is entitled to be cal ed a bird". (75) Scaling this model up to a full-sized version apparently proved a problem, however, and the Mt.

Carmel Aeronautic Navigation Company eventual y went bel y up. (76) On the other hand, some said Pennington did secretly build and fly full-size versions of his airship. A man who claimed to have been the pilot of one of Pennington's craft said these flights usual y took place at night "because the huge wings of his ship tended to attract too much attention during the daytime." (77)

Another group of possible airship inventors was much more circumspect about their work. Their story is known today only because one of the group's members maintained a personal chronicle of their activities.That individual was a man named Charles A. Delschau, who emigrated to this country from Germany about 1848, living first in California. Around 1900, he moved to Houston, Texas, where he died at the age of 92 in 1924.

Del schau devoted the last years of his life to producing a series of il ustrated notebooks. These notebooks, which were written in a combination of German, English and code (not al of which has been deciphered), told a remarkable story.

Del schau claimed that he and approximately 60 other inventive types came together at a remote site near Sonora, California sometime during the 1850s and formed a group cal ed the Aero Club to secretly build and fly a series of revolutionary aircraft. Judging from Del schau's drawings, these aircraft were general y dirigible-shaped, but that's where their similarity to dirigibles ended. Unlike dirigibles-which depend on lighter-than-air gases to provide needed lift—the club's devices were operated with a new substance invented by one of the club's members.

Del schau-who referred to this substance variously as "supe" (or "suppe") and "NB"-claimed it possessed some sort of anti-gravity property and could "negate

weight." This same miracle substance, he said, was also used to drive the motors which propel ed the ships and powered their lights.

But when the substance's inventor died sometime in the 1860s, the man supposedly took the formula for his marvelous discovery to the grave with him. The notebooks say the club was forced to disband soon afterward. However, one entry in the notebooks also stated that the club in California was merely a branch of a larger secret organization Del schau cal ed "NYMZA." It's unclear whether this was a single word or an acronym. (78)

In a precursor to today's UFO debate, there was also at least one report during this time

suggesting possible government involvement with the airship mystery. According to an 1897 article in a Texas newspaper:

"It may be that those people out west who for the last six months have been fil ing the papers with accounts of a mysterious airship which they have been seeing in the sky are not monumental liars after al .

It is possible that experiments now being made by the U.S. government with a view to producing a genuine airship may be responsible for their visions.

For several years, the government has had in its employ a wel -known aeronaut who gets, it is said, a salary of $10,000 a year. Constant work and experiment have been going on at Fort Logan, near Denver.A profound secrecy has been maintained as to what has been accomplished, even Army officers themselves only getting vague inklings of what is going on". (79) The claims of some other late 19m Century candidates for airship inventor carried added weight by virtue of the fact that they were standing next to a functioning airship at. the time. One such incident occurred in the early California phase of the great airship mystery and was reported in a newspaper article datelined in San Jose on December 1,1896:

"The champion airship story of the season is told by John A. Horen, an electrician in the employ of Electrical Improvement Company of this place. Horen says he has a patent on an electrical speaking appliance, and that by appointment he went to San Francisco Thursday to see the inventor of the airship, who wished to see the appliance.

Said Horen: "We went on horseback to a point on Sandy Beach, where the airship was, got aboard and rose very high. We traveled westward. Before day next morning, we saw lights. The inventor said they were the lamps of Honolulu. We turned east and Saturday evening about dark, landed near where we started.

The airship rose by means of two propel ers. The movement was noiseless and swift. The motive power is not steam or electricity. It is a wonderful machine, and can he stopped and made to stand stil in the air anywhere, and comes down light as a feather". (80) An aircraft could cover the roughly 5,000-mile round-trip distance between northern California and the Hawai an Islands in a little over 48 hours if it flew non-stop at an average speed of about 100

miles per hour.

The fol owing incidents were al reported during a one-month period in 1897.

On the night of April 16th, a man a said he came upon a landed airship near Greenvil e, Texas.

He described it as "an immense cigar-shaped vessel" with large wings, a wheel "like the sidewheel of a steamboat" at the front end and a fish-like tail at the rear. He estimated it was 75 feet long and 30 feet wide.

The witness saw three men walking around the craft. Two of them began to perform some sort of repairs to one wing, and the third cal ed out to the witness, asking him to mail some letters. The witness approached and began asking questions, to which one crewman replied:

"We are experimenting with this vessel. We expect to revolutionize travel and transportation. We have seen a few copies of the newspapers and are very much amused and entertained at the accounts of the appearance of our ship.

At a little town in the interior of New York state, I have worked for many years on my ship.

About two weeks ago, I started, accompanied by these two assistants, to make a trial trip. We started in the night to avoid being seen. Everything worked so wel that I decided to keep going, and I soon found myself passing over the state of Indiana.

We stopped in a secluded spot near a smal railway station. I went into the town and procured a daily paper, which gave an account of my ship being seen. Since that time, we have been passing from place to place at a rapid rate of speed.

I am going home in a few days to improve my ship. I find some improvement necessary to perfect it. You wil hear from me again in a short while, and then it wil not be vague reports, but a full description of the modern wonder, the airship".

The aeronaut answered one more question before he and his companions boarded the airship and flew off, in response to the witness' inquiry about the craft's method of propulsion:

"Within are electrical machines which furnish the motive power and lights. Once in motion, the wind operating on the large wheel in front like a windmil keeps the ship in motion and but little electricity is needed". (81)

Around the same time, a reporter for a newspaper in Decatur, Illinois claimed he was taken on a ride in an airship by its inventor, a farmer of his acquaintance named C. Devonbaugh, who lived near the town of Vandalia.

The reporter described "one of the greatest wonders of the age" as a cabin with space for five or six passengers suspended beneath two 45-foot-long cylinders fil ed with lifting gas. As for the craft's motive power:

"Electricity was the force used. It was generated by a new process which he wished to perfect and cover with letter patent before al owing the secret to pass into other hands".

The reporter went on to recount an al eged 100-mile per hour nighttime airship trip to Chicago and back which the two took:

"Suddenly, a towering mass of il umination loomed up before us. "That's the Masonic Temple,"

said Mr. D. 'And now I guess it's time to surprise the people." He stepped into the cavern of mysteries (and) pulled a knob. A double line of electric lamps started at the bow and extending around the vessel gave out a various assortment of colors".

The inventor said he'd communicated an offer to the rebels in Cuba to employ his airship against the Spanish troops there, adding:

"The effect which dynamite bombs may cause when they come tumbling from an invisible source high in the air can be imagined". (82)

On the night of April 22nd, a Texas farmer was awakened by a whirring sound and looked outside. According to a contemporary newspaper account:

"(He saw) bril iant lights streaming from a ponderous vessel of strange proportions which rested on the ground in his cornfield. (Upon going outside, he was) accosted by two men with buckets, who asked permission to draw water from his wel .

Mr. Nichols was kindly invited to accompany them to the ship. He conversed freely with the crew, composed of six or eight individuals, about the ship. The machinery was so complicated that in his short interview he could gain no knowledge of its workings. However, one of the crew told him the problem of aerial navigation had been solved.

The ship or car is built from a newly discovered material that has the property of self-sustenance in the air, and the motive power is highly condensed electricity. He was informed that five of these ships were built in a smal town in Iowa. Soon the invention wil be given to the public. An immense stock company is now being formed, and within the next year the machine wil be in general use.

Mr. Nichols lives atjosserand, Trinity County, Texas, and wil convince any incredulous one by showing the place where the ship rested". (83)

One of the most extensive interviews granted by an airship occupant while standing next to his landed craft was the one al eged to have occurred near Lancaster, Ohio and revealed to the public in the columns of a Cincinnati newspaper in its April 25,1897 issue:

"A gentleman who is prominent in (Lancaster) and wel -known throughout the state, but who positively declines to permit the use of his name lest his friends should accuse him of "hitting the pipe,"

stated to the Enquirer correspondent today that he had not only seen the much bruited airship, but had pretty thoroughly inspected it, as wel as conversed with one of its occupants.

His story, which he told in al seriousness, is a remarkable one, and argues either that he saw what he describes or possesses an imagination which ought to insure anyone a fortune.

"A few evenings since," said he, "I was on my way home between Baltimore, in the northeastern part of the county, and this city. It was between 8 and 9 o'clock. My horse, a very quiet one, suddenly exhibited signs of both fear and distress, and became greatly excited.

On looking about for some explanation of the animal's unusual conduct, I saw slowly descending into afield nearby an object which looked as large or larger that a full-grown elephant. Fore and aft, it carried bril iant white lights which il uminated the country for considerable distance like a pair of electric globes.

By this time I had become as badly rattled as my horse, and from the whirring, hissing noise of the descending object, I expected to hear a terrible crash when it struck the ground.

You can judge my surprise when I saw it come to the ground not a hundred yards distant without concussion or even a jar. In the scintil ating lights, I saw the forms of two men and heard them conversing in an unknown language. The aerial visitor, as it stood in the open field, looked as large as a barn.

My first impulse was to whip up my horse, which had quieted down somewhat, and get out of the neighborhood. On further reflection, however, I drove to a thick growth of underbrush where, out of sight of the machine, I tethered my horse and went back to reconnoiter.

I was soon face to face with the airship occupants and in conversation with them. One of them was clearly a foreigner, and it struck me that he was Japanese, or belonged to some other Oriental race.

He was apparently wil ing to talk, but his language was unintel igible to me.

The other was an American or, if not, then an Englishman, judging from his accent and pronunciation. He talked freely enough, but gave me no real information. He wanted to know just where they were, and what the people and newspapers were saying about the object which stood before me.

Happening to have a copy of the Enquirer containing several dispatches concerning the airship in my pocket, I gave it to him to read at his leisure. He was profuse in his thanks, and said that newspapers had been rather a scare article for some time, and that he was anxious to see what they said about it.

But why are you cal ing around in this mysterious way? I inquired. Why don't you let the world know what you are doing?

"That's easily explained. We have discovered the principle, but there are doubtless many applications of it. If we were to appear in public, even after patenting our principle and discovery, with the appliances we now have, it would only be a little while until other men would probably discover better forms of application, and we would be compel ed to divide the benefits of our discovery.

We are on a tedious voyage of experimentation, and have been for more than six months. We often mingle with the world, but our discovery is hidden away, and no one suspects who or what we are.

We pass as tourists among our fel ow men.

We are constantly making improvements. As soon as one is worked out, we descend in some secluded spot, go to a town or city, and have the necessary mechanism made from drawings, adjust it and go on with further tests and experiments. At these times, we are probably looked on as harmless cranks trying to invent perpetual motion. Six months hence, we wil probably have reached the limit of possible improvement. Then we wil patent it in every country, and then in every manufacturing center they wil turn out the aeribarque, which wil revolutionize the world."

Do you cal this concern an aeribarque?

"That is what we cal it. The name is exactly descriptive of the object."

Wil you permit me to inspect it?

He turned to his companion, and after a short consultation, replied: "In a general way only. But I wil explain nothing to you. If you can reason out how it ascends and descends or is propel ed, wel and good. But I shal answer no questions. Look it over and draw your own conclusions."

The contrivance was a strange piece of mechanism, and stood from 12 to 15 feet high. The lower half, or car, was an oblong square 8- by- 5 feet. The upper half, an elongated globe, apparently 8 feet at its greatest diameter, gradual y diminished and terminating in round points, its extreme length being 15 or 18 feet.

The frame appeared to be a wire network. The wires were of an immense size-an inch in diameter on the bottom and sides of the car, growing smal er as they ascended, until at the top of the elongated globe they were not more than a quarter of an inch. They were joined together at close intervals and in both directions across the bottom, and ran up perpendicularly 5 or 6 feet, then curved inward until they

nearly met. Then outward, upward and over til they formed the complete circle of the outer frame of the elongated globe or cigar-shaped apparatus spoken of in the papers. Inside of this upper network was a bag or a bal oon, just fitting it and partial y inflated.

A little testing convinced me that the supposed wires were tubular contrivances composed either of steel or aluminum or some new metal, clearly of great strength and exceeding lightness. At every point of contact, these tubular wires were inserted into each other, while one nearly an inch in diameter coming up from below was inserted into the lower part of the bal oon.

Thrown on the bottom of the car were several Oriental rugs, while al sorts of luggage, blankets, coats, canned goods and the like were stowed away or suspended overhead. Near the end of the car was a smal , box-like table on top of which were a number of knobs or buttons very like the appliances we see in electrical establishments.

The gentleman with whom I had been conversing seated himself at the table and said: "Take hold of the crossbars and lift the aeribarque if you can."

I made this attempt but failed.

He touched one of the points on the table, and there was a hissing sound like escaping steam or compressed air. He touched another, and a tremor ran through every part of the machine, and the bal oon expanded perceptibly.

"Now, try again."

I grasped the crossbars and threw al my strength into the effort, but this time (the) machine didn't seem to weigh a pound. With one hand I could lift it above my head. I begged him to tel me how the attraction of gravitation had been overcome. He said: "Wait til the proper time comes."

He touched a third button, and the lights disappeared; a fourth, and they reappeared, one vivid green, the other white. Then he alternated them with other colors. In the meantime, I discovered that he was changing the temperature of the tubular frame from temperate to extreme cold and then to 200

degrees or above.

He touched a series of buttons in rapid succession. There was the hiss of escaping air, the tremor through every line of the framework. The bal oon fil ed with a hissing sound til it bulged through the metal ic network. The aeribarque rose like a startled bird.

"Good night" was cal ed down from a height of a thousand feet. The propel er expanded, the rudder dropped into place and swung around, changing the ship's course at an acute angle, and more quickly than it takes to tel it, it had disappeared in the direction of Newark". (84) Another Ohio man was convinced that a recluse living near the town of Savannah in that state was the inventive genius behind some of the airship sightings in the area:

"He is wealthy and owns considerable property in the West. He has lately returned from Nebraska, and since his return, his neighbors affirm that he has been experimenting with an airship". (85) In the early hours of May 1st, the author of the above remarks and several other residents of the town of Shiloh claimed they saw this unnamed inventor's creation in action:

"It was wel lighted and revealed its outline quite plainly. It was supported in the air by a narrow, oblong cylindrical-shaped vessel which looked to be inflated. Underneath this was the machinery of the invention. The upper part was about 70 feet long, and the lower part much smal er. Smal sails were attached to the lower part, and there appeared to be several smal propel ers rotating at a high rate of speed.

When we first saw it, it was moving slowly. But the sails were suddenly changed, and it arose high in the air and sailed at a good rate of speed against the brisk wind and passed beyond our sight".

(86) One name popped up repeatedly in connection with the occupants of landed mystery airships in 1897. That name was Wilson.

On April 19th, a man was thrown from his horse-drawn rig near the Texas-Louisiana border when the animal was spooked by the appearance of an airship overhead. The craft then landed about 100 feet away, and two occupants descended a rope ladder and walked up to the startled man.

"It was decidedly gratifying to find that they were plain, everyday Americans like myself," recal ed the witness. He said the two aeronauts apologized for causing his accident.

One of the pair, who introduced himself as Mr. Wilson, indicated he was the owner of the airship, and his companion was Scott Warren. The witness accepted their invitation to go aboard the craft.

Inside, he met a Mr. Waters, described as the engineer, and a Mexican man he took to be the cook. In a letter to a friend, the witness recounted his time aboard the airship. He described an 8-by-14-foot cabin that reminded him of a smoking room on a train, with three reclining chairs anchored to the floor and cushioned seats lining the wal s. In addition, he said:

"There were a number of incandescent lamps about the wal s and hanging from the ceiling. I immediately concluded that the motive power was electricity, and so expressed myself to Mr. Wilson.

He said this was not the case, but that it was propel ed and sustained by a gas which had the property of great compressibility under a slight pressure and a correspondingly great power of expansion".

The witness said he elicited some details from Mr. Wilson about the secret gas and the engine it powered:

"There was a receiver made of aluminum from which pipes passed to what appeared to me to be a square box, at each end of which was a cylinder with an exhaust chamber in which worked a piston attached to a very singularly constructed driving wheel like the sprocket of a bicycle. There were four wheels, one within the other, and these Mr. Wilson cal ed the accumulators".

The witness also said he learned something about how the airship was navigated:

"To elevate or depress the ship while flying through the air, a smal wheel at the stern of the boat is operated. This wheel was something like that in a ship's pilot house, but instead of having spokes, there was an arrangement of magnets connected with wires to storage batteries. By passing the current over the tire of the wheel, the operator was able to overcome gravity, thus elevating the ship. By passing the current in the opposite direction and under the tire, the weight of the ship was increased and could sink like a shot to the earth. And by passing the currents in opposite directions at the same time, the vessel would remain horizontal at any distance from the earth.

At one end was a propel er working on a shaft connected with the sprocket wheels such as those on a tugboat, except that the blades of this ship's propel er were enormous, being 10 feet in length. Wlxat I thought were sails were canvas wings used in steering. Mr. Wilson stated that he was at work on a contrivance that would obviate the necessity of using sails. The length of the ship was 75 feet by 25 feet".

When asked how fast his airship could go, Mr. Wilson estimated its top speed at around 160

miles per hour. He offered to take the witness aloft to search for the man's missing horses and rig, but the witness opted to look for them on foot. (87)

A few hours later, a farmer and his son investigated a lighted object in a pasture near Beaumont, Texas. It turned out to be a landed airship some 130 feet long and 20 feet wide with four men standing outside it.

One of the men, who said his name was Wilson, requested some water for the craft, explaining:

"The ship carries a water bal ast that is pumped to the bow when it is desired to bring the vessel to earth, and to the stern when the course is skyward".

According to the witnesses, Wilson also revealed the fol owing about his airship:

"(It) was propel ed by four large wings, two on either side, and steered by propel ers attached to the bow and stern, electricity being the power used. The hull of the ship is made of steel and contains compartments into which compressed air is pumped when the ship is in action".

The aeronaut identified as Wilson further stated that the craft was enroute from a flight over the Gulf of Mexico to Iowa, where it and four others like it had been built. (88) On the fol owing day, a Texas sheriff came upon a landed airship on his property near the town of Uvalde. The three occupants, one of whom said his name was Wilson, requested and received a supply of water for their craft.

While the water loading was taking place, Mr. Wilson told the sheriff he was from Goshen, New York and inquired about a former acquaintance, another Texas sheriff named Akers. Later, Sheriff Akers

told a reporter:

"I can say that while living in Fort Worth in '76 and '77, I was wel acquainted with a man by the name of Wilson from New York state and was on very friendly terms with him.

He was of a mechanical turn of mind, and was then working on aerial navigation and something that would astonish the world. He was a finely educated man, then 24 years of age, and seemed to have money with which to pursue his inventions, devoting his whole time to them.

From conversations we had while in Fort Worth, I think that Mr. Wilson, having succeeded in constructing a practical airship, would probably hunt me up to show me that he was not so wild in his claims as I then supposed".

When the water loading was complete, the witness said Wilson and the other aeronauts entered the airship and "its great wings and fins were set in motion, and it sped away northward in the direction of San Angelo." (89)

Three days after this incident (on April 23rd), two men said they discovered a landed airship near the town on Kountze, Texas. They described it as cigar-shaped, and estimated it was 50 feet long and 20

feet wide. Next to the craft were its two occupants, who told the witnesses they were repairing a punctured

"air compartment." The aeronauts said their names were Jackson and Wilson. (90) Lastly, it may only be a coincidence, but one of the California aero club members identified by Charles Del schau in his notebooks was a man named Wilson. (91) In the final analysis, one large, unanswered question hovers over the entire secret

airship inventor scenario. If some lone genius or inventive group had perfected this cutting-edge technology in 1897, why did no one ever come forward to reap the rewards of fame and fortune that would surely have resulted from such an achievement?

Chapter 2

Victorian Spaceships

As if the mystery of Victorian-era airships wasn't puzzling enough already, mixed in with the predominate descriptions of just-slightly-ahead-of-their-time dirigible-type craft were a handful of reports of streamlined, metal ic-looking vehicles with no visible means of propulsion. And in some cases, the occupants of these futuristic craft were described as decidedly otherworldly in appearance.

Several of these incidents actual y predate the great California mystery airship wave at the end of 1896. One dates back at least as far as 1888, and suggests a possible link between UFOs and another wel -known phenomenon - Bigfoot.

In a journal dated that year, a cattleman recorded his experiences while wintering over with a tribe of Indians in northern California. One day he noticed a member of the tribe carrying a platter of raw meat into the woods. His curiosity piqued, the man fol owed the Indian to a nearby cave, where he was amazed to see the recipient of the food was a large, hairy man-like creature.

The witness described the creature as heavily-built and completely covered with long, dark hair everywhere except on its palms and around its eyes. One non-human feature he noticed was that the creature seemed to lack a neck. It's head appeared to rest directly on its shoulders.

(These are al features mentioned frequently by modern Bigfoot witnesses. For information on the Bigfoot-UFO connection in more recent years, see the author's book "Bigfoot Across America".) Eventual y, the man got his hosts to tel him about their unusual guest. The Indians cal ed him

"Crazy Bear," and said the creature had come to earth in a "smal moon" which had landed long enough to discharge three such creatures. Inside the "smal moon" were individuals said to resemble the Indians themselves, except that they had shorter hair and wore shiny clothing. The occupants of the object waved at the Indians from a door in the side of the craft before flying off.

The Indians considered their hirsute visitor a powerful talisman, and kept it wel fed and out of the hands of rival tribes. They told the cattleman that other creatures like this one had been brought to the area in similar fashion over the years. (92)

Sometime during the same decade (the 1880s), another bal -shaped UFO figured in an incident al eged to have occurred at an unspecified location in the American West. Here's the story, as retold by a woman who heard it from the principle witness:

"The man had gone hunting in the hil s, where he saw a round thing settle down from the sky on top of a mountain. He was frightened, hut that did not stop him from climbing up the mountain to see what it was. It stood in a clearing of some woods, and looked like a big silver hal . Soon, a piece of the top slid back, and two things came out".

According to the witness, the "things" appeared to be an attractive man and woman. He said they were shorter in stature than himself and acted quite friendly:

"They tried to talk to me, but neither of us could understand what the other said. Then they stepped back into the bal , slid back the lid, and the bal went up into the sky til it was lost to my eyes".

(93)

Interestingly, the witnesses in an 1892 incident in the waters of the Caribbean described a similarly-shaped UFO (or rather a pair of them). This case also introduces another anomalous element into the mix - a little-known sub-category of of UFOs sometimes referred to as USOs, or Unidentified Submersible Objects.

"The Green" was sailing near Jamaica when two large, glowing objects suddenly emerged from the water next to the ship. The vessel's captain described the incident as fol ows:

"The decks of the ship were brighter than I had ever seen them. Several of my crew were terrified.

There was no logical explanation I could give them for this phenomenon.

I have seen bal lightning, and it was definitely not in that category. The glowing bal s were about the size of a smal house. They fol owed alongside us, staying a distance of about 200 yards on each side.

After what seemed like an eternity, the intensity of the fiery substance seemed to lessen. They dropped toward the surface of the ocean as they dimmed. Both the crewmembers and I were particularly grateful when they slipped beneath the waves". (94)

The fol owing year (1893), a farmer in Australia had an unpleasant encounter with the occupant of a saucer-shaped UFO that stayed with him for the rest of his life. The incident began when he observed the object land in a paddock on his property, and he walked toward it to investigate.

A "man" in strange clothing emerged from the craft and directed some sort of light beam at the witness. The farmer was instantly thrown to the ground in a stunned condition. When he regained his senses, the UFO and its occupant were gone. The hand which had been struck by the beam was permanently paralyzed. (95)

Three years later (in 1896), a saucer-shaped UFO paid a memorable visit to a Missouri farm family, and left behind another macabre mystery that has become a subject of intensive study by paranormal investigators in recent years-cattle mutilations.

Here's how the daughter in the family described the incident years later:

"In the evening, we would sit in the yard trying to pick out the different constel ations. Al at once, we saw flashing lights. At first, we thought they were a star shower. But the "stars" stayed in a circle as if they were al strung together like beads. Meteors scatter when they fal , so we soon realized we were seeing something else. The circle of lights just kept whirling and fal ing toward us. They were brighter than any star.

At that time, I had never seen a bal oon, airplanes were in the future, and nothing belonged in the sky but the sun, moon and stars. We watched, fascinated. We could not take our eyes off the object as it moved right toward us, turning and fal ing.

Just when we thought it would crash in the yard, it stopped and hovered over the barn. We could now see it was a large, saucer-like shape. Its lights were blinding. The whole barn lot lit up like day.

We fled into the house. My father went into the kitchen to look out the window. The lights were stil hovering there. We could see no sign of life, no forms moving out of the object. If there was a door, it was on the other side.

My parents gathered us children in the living room, and we huddled together, absolutely terrified.

At last, my father got up the courage to go back to the kitchen and look outside. The thing had gone.

The next morning, Ben took his dog Cappie and went out to the pasture to bring up the milk cows. He came running back to the house scared out of his wits. He kept pointing to the barn, stammering words that made no sense. Final y, he told us what he saw.

As he and Cappie neared the gate that opened into the pasture, Cappie stopped in his tracks, whining and barking. In a large patch of burned grass were three of our steers lying dead on the ground.

Their bodies were beginning to bloat. Their legs were poking out, stiff as boards. Cappie snarled, showed his teeth and refused to go near them.

Father ordered us to stay in the house while he went out to the pasture. When he came back, he was as shocked as Ben. He told us he had examined the steers, and as far as he could see, there was only one thing wrong with them: they had been completely drained of blood. The only marks on them were some dried blood on their throats from two puncture holes in the jugular vein.

Later that week, when the newspapers came from St. Louis, there were several stories of such incidents al over Missouri that night. People had seen hovering lights, and in each case only three animals were drained of blood no matter how many cattle were in the pasture.

Where the saucers had hovered, grass was burned away. In our pasture, where the grass was burned nothing ever grew again". (96)

Among the non-dirigible-shaped UFOs reported by witnesses during the 1897 mystery airship wave was the one seen over Benton Harbor, Michigan on the evening of April 11th and described in a local newspaper the fol owing day:

"It came in sight about 7:45 and traveled rapidly north-northwest. It was in view for fully 15

minutes.

To Mr. Lee, it had the appearance of a huge bal of fire when viewed with the naked eye. But with opera glasses leveled upon it, Mr. Lee claims its aspect greatly changed. It threw off a variety of colored lights of soft, mel ow luster". (97)

On the night fol owing this incident, more than 50 persons observed a brightly-lit, V-shaped object fly over the town of Lincoln, Illinois. (98)

Around the same time, an object that several witnesses described as "pear-shaped with the apex downward" was seen speeding across the sky over Fort Wayne, Indiana. One man saw a slightly different configuration:

(It was) round with a V-shaped tail to it. The color of it seemed a bright yel ow, and strong rays of the same colored light were constantly being shot out from the main body. (99) A ray-emitting object of roughly similar shape was reported by a number of citizens in Cincinnati, Ohio on the evening of May 4th:

"(It was) egg-shaped, red in color and appearing as though a portion of it was covered with a curtain, the rays escaping in the center and at each end. (It was) moving in a zigzag course, first up, then down". (100)

While most occupants of the 1896-1897 mystery airships were described by witnesses as normal-looking human beings, there were some notable exceptions.

In at least one case, the occupants of a landed object were said to be much smal er than average humans. The incident occurred in the wee hours of May 3, 1897 near Cassvil e, Indiana, when a man came upon a 40-foot-long, cigar-shaped craft sitting in a gravel pit. According to the witness, the object was "inhabited by a crew of foreign-tongued midgets who spoke no English." (101) At the other end of the size scale, a number of occupants were described as considerably tal er than the average human. One of the earliest of such incidents was also among the most

dramatic. It was related by two men who were traveling by horse-drawn rig between Lodi and Stockton, California in November of 1896, as recounted shortly afterward in a local newspaper:

"We were jogging along quietly when the horse stopped suddenly and gave a snort of terror.

Looking up, we beheld three strange beings. They resembled humans in many respects, but stil they were not like anything I had ever seen. They were nearly or quite seven feet high, and very slender.

We were both somewhat startled, and the first impulse was to drive on. The horse, however, refused to budge. When we saw that we were being regarded more with an air of curiosity than anything else, we concluded to get out and investigate.

I walked up to where the strange-looking persons were and addressed them. I asked where they were from. They seemed not to understand me, but began warbling. Their remarks were addressed to each other, and sounded like a monotonous chant, inclined to be guttural.

I saw it was no use to attempt a conversation, so I satisfied myself with watching and examining them. They seemed to take great interest in ourselves, the horse and buggy, and scrutinized everything very carefully. While they were thus engaged, I was enabled to inspect them as wel .

As I have already stated, they were seven feet in height and very slender. Their hands were quite smal and delicate, and their fingers were without nails. Their feet were nearly twice as long as those of an ordinary man, though they were narrow. The toes were also long and slender. I noticed that they seemed to have much better use of their feet than their hands.

As one of them came close to me, I reached out to touch him. Placing my hand under his elbow, (I) pressed gently upward. Lo and behold, I lifted him from the ground with scarcely an effort.

They were without any sort of clothing, but were covered with a natural growth hard to describe.

It was not hair, neither was it like feathers. It was as soft as silk to the touch, and their skin was like velvet.

Their faces and heads were without hair. The ears were very smal , and the nose had the appearance of polished ivory. The eyes were large and lustrous. The mouth was smal , and it seemed to me they were without teeth.

From the description I give, I do not want you to get the idea that these creatures were hideous.

They were markedly the contrary. They were possessed of a strange beauty. I can express myself in no other way. They were graceful to a degree, and more divinely beautiful than anything I ever beheld.

Each of them had swung under his left arm a bag to which was attached a nozzle, and every little while one would place the nozzle in his mouth, at which time I heard a sound as of escaping gas.

The strangest part of the story is yet to come. It is the lights they carried. Each held in his hand something about the size of a hen's egg. Upon holding them up and partly opening the hand, these substances emitted the most remarkable, intense and penetrating light one can imagine.

Final y, they became tired of examining us and our horse and buggy. Then one of them, at a signal from one who appeared to be the leader, attempted to lift me. He could not move me. The three of them tried it without the slightest success. They appeared to have no muscular power outside of being able to move their own limbs.

After trying in vain to move either of us, they turned in the direction of the Woodbridge Canal.

As they flashed their lights toward the bridge, we beheld a startling sight. There, resting in the air about 20 feet above the water, was an immense airship.

It was 150 feet in length at least, though probably not over 20 feet in diameter at the widest part.

It was pointed at both ends. Outside of a large rudder, there was no visible machinery.

The three walked rapidly toward the ship, not as you or I would, but with a swaying motion, their feet only touching the ground at intervals of about 15 feet.

With a little spring, they rose to the machine, opened a door in the side, and disappeared within.

I do not know of what the affair was built, but just before it started, I struck it with a rock and it gave no sound. It went through the air very rapidly. (It) expanded and contracted with a muscular motion, and was soon out of sight". (102)

An occupant of even more imposing dimensions was al eged to have been aboard a mysterious aerial object that reportedly landed near Wil iamston, Michigan on April 17,1897, as recounted in an area newspaper shortly afterward:

"This morning, at a point a mile and a half south and west of this vil age, a bal oon or flying machine alighted. The airship was seen about an hour before it alighted by a dozen farmers or more.

A strange man, if man he might be cal ed, was in charge of the ship. Wlnle he seemed to have

plenty of clothes, he seemed to have no use for them, as he was almost naked and seemed to be suffering from the heat.

He is almost 9-1/2 feet tal . His talk, while musical, is not talk at al , but seems to be a repetition of bel owing.

One of the farmers attempted to go near him, and got a kick that wil last him for some time, having got his hip broken.

Great excitement prevails here, and lots of people are flocking herefrom Okemos and Locke to view the strange being at a distance, as no one dares to go near. He seems to be trying to talk to the people. The people here are credulous. Those who have not seen refuse to believe, although six of the best people are here and affirm that it is the truth. From their excited manners, we are led to believe that no hoax exists.

At 8:10 last evening, the airship passed south and a little west of the vil age. Hundreds of people watched its flight". (103)

Four days later (on April 21st), a witness claimed contact with stil tal er occupants of a wel -lit object he said landed near Ogdin, West Virginia. The man

swore the eight creatures aboard the craft were between 11 and 12 feet tal , with disproportionately large heads.

According to the witness, the creatures told him they were exploring the planet. They ate smal pil s and "drank air" before their ship took off after an hour-long stay. (104) There were also several pre-1900 reports of crashed UFOs involving craft that strike the modern reader as more like spaceships than dirigibles. The earliest such incident may have been the one al egedly experienced by a mountain man in western Montana in 1865, as reported in a contemporary newspaper:

"He was engaged in trapping in the mountains about 75 or 100 miles from the Great Fal s of the Upper Missouri, in the neighborhood of Cadotte Pass. After sunset one evening, he beheld a bright, luminous body in the heavens which moved with great rapidity in an easterly direction. It suddenly separated into particles resembling "the bursting of a sky-rocket in the air."

A few minutes later, he heard a heavy explosion which jarred the earth perceptibly. This was shortly fol owed by a rushing sound like a tornado sweeping through the forest. A strong wind sprang up about the same time, but suddenly subsided, fil ing the air with peculiar odors of a sulphurous nature.

On the ensuing day, he discovered at the distance of about two miles from his camping place, he could see in either direction a wide path had been cut through the forest. Giant trees (were) uprooted and broke off near the ground. The tops of hil s (were) shaved off, and the earth plowed up in many places.

Fol owing up this track of desolation, he soon ascertained the cause of it in the shape of an immense stone driven into the side of a mountain. The most remarkable part of the story is an examination of this stone and how it had been divided into compartments.

In several places, it was carved with hieroglyphics. Mr. Lumley also discovered fragments of a substance resembling glass, and here and there dark stains, as though caused by a liquid. He is confident that the hieroglyphics are the work of human hands, and the stone itself is a fragment of an immense body (that) must have been used for some purpose by animated beings". (105) An al eged UFO crash in Nebraska in 1884 is general y treated as a hoax today, but was apparently reported as factual by at least one area newspaper at the time:

"About 35 miles northwest of Benkelman, Dundy County, on the 6th of June, a very startling phenomenon occurred. It seems that John W. El is and three of his herdsmen and a number of other cowboys were out engaged in a roundup. They were startled by a terrific whirring noise over their heads, and turning their eyes saw a blazing body fal ing like a shot to earth. It struck beyond them, being hidden from view by a bank.

He rode at once to the spot and, it is asserted, saw fragments of cogwheels and other pieces of machinery lying on the ground, scattered in the path made by the aerial visitor, glowing with heat so intense as to scorch the grass for a long distance around each fragment and make it impossible for one to approach it.

Coming to the edge of the deep ravine into which the strange object had fal en, they undertook to see what it was. But the heat was so great that the air about it was fairly ablaze, and it emitted a light so dazzling that the eye could not rest upon it more than a moment.

The heat from this strange wreck was so intense that a cowboy named Wil iamson fel senseless from gazing at it at too close quarters. His face was blistered, and his hair singed to a crisp. His condition is said to be dangerous. The distance from the aerolite was nearly 200 feet. The burned man was taken to Mr. El is' house, cared for as wel as circumstance would al ow, and a doctor sent for. His brother, who lives in Denver, was telegraphed for.

Finding it impossible to approach the mysterious visitor, the party turned back on its trail. When it first touched the earth, the sand was fused to an unknown depth over a space of about 20 feet wide by 30 feet long, and the melted stuff was stil bubbling and hissing.

Messengers were sent out to neighboring ranches, and many came to see the strange sight that night, at which time the light emitted from it was like the blazing rays of the sun and too powerful to be borne by human eyes.

On the morning of the 7th, another visit was paid the luminous curiosity. In the party was E. W.

Rawlins, brand inspector for this district, from whom a full verification of particulars was obtained.

The smal er portions of the vast machinery had cooled so that they could be approached, but not handled. One piece that looked like the blade of a propel er screw of metal in appearance like brass, about 16 inches wide, three inches thick and 3-1/2 feet long, was picked up on a spade. It would not weigh more than five pounds, but appeared as strong and compact as any metal.

A fragment of a wheel with a mil ed rim, apparently having a diameter of seven or eight feet, was also picked up. It seemed to be of the same material, and had the same remarkable lightness.

The aerolite, or whatever it is, seems to be about 50 or 60 feet long, cylindrical, and about 10 or 12 feet in diameter.

Great excitement exists in the vicinity, and the roundup is suspended while the cowboys wait for the wonderful find to cool off so they can examine it". (106) Alas, the cowboys were destined to be disappointed. Despite its substantial appearance, another report said the debris dissolved into a gelatinous mass after a heavy rain. (107) There was no mention of finding the remains of any crewmembers at the scene in Nebraska, but a similar incident in Texas four years later (in 1888) al egedly featured an occupant (which didn't long survive the crash) and debris from the craft (which may have).

The incident began when a teenage boy weeding the family garden on a farm near the town of Grundy heard a loud noise like a clap of thunder and immediately found himself being showered from above by pieces of metal. He quickly retreated to the house until the aerial bombardment stopped.

Venturing outside, he came upon a badly injured man lying amid the debris. With the help of his mother and sisters, the boy moved the individual into the house. The man eventual y regained consciousness, and spoke in a language none of the witnesses could understand. He drank water and ate a slice of melon, but died a few hours later.

Meanwhile, word had spread through the surrounding countryside about the "man who fel from the sky," and many neighbors came to see the strange visitor for themselves. The horde of spectators soon trampled the family's garden and emptied both their water tank and wel . When darkness came, the family removed the body from the house and buried it outside.

This story has an interesting postscript. When the principle witness recounted the events to some friends years later, they expressed more than a little skepticism. He then produced several pieces of metal for their inspection which he said he'd col ected from those that had fal en to the ground at the time of the incident.

This material was of two different types. One, which was silver-gray in color and about a half-inch thick, proved extremely lightweight. At the edges, an interior crystal ine structure was visible. Repeated attempts to scratch it with a file or dent it with a hammer were unsuccessful. The other type of debris was heavier and dark blue in color. The witness placed it on a hot stove for several minutes, but it failed to

get hot. (108)

During the 19tn Century, it was common for various sideshow-type attractions to set up shop outside the era's periodic world's fairs and international expositions to capitalize on traffic entering and leaving the official exhibits inside the fairgrounds. One such attraction outside the 1893 Chicago world's fair (also known as the Columbian Exposition) is of interest to us because it may have had some connection to a crashed UFO.

Accounts of this particular display are sketchy, consisting solely of the recol ections of persons who visited it at the time and then passed their stories down to relatives. They describe an exhibit cal ed "Men from Outer Space," which purported to be the bodies of four occupants recovered from a downed aerial object.

These al eged ufonauts, who were preserved in glass containers fil ed with formaldehyde, were said to have been about three feet tal and hairless. They reportedly had six fingers on each hand and the same number of toes on each foot. (109)

No discussion of possible otherworldly visitors in Victorian times would be complete without a look at the strange events al eged to have occurred in the smal north Texas community of Aurora during the height of the 1897 airship wave. The fol owing April 17th report from a correspondent at the scene appeared in a Dal as newspaper:

"About 6 o'clock this morning, the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing through the country.

It was traveling due north, and much nearer the earth than ever before. Evidently some of the machinery was out of order, for it was making a speed of only 10 or 12 miles an hour and gradual y settling toward the earth.

It sailed directly over the public square, and when it reached the north part of town, col ided with the tower of Judge Proctor's windmil and went to pieces with a terrific explosion, scattering debris over several acres of ground, wrecking the windmil and water tank and destroying the judge's flower garden.

The pilot of the ship is supposed to have been the only one on board, and while his remains are badly disfigured, enough of the original has been picked up to show that he was not an inhabitant of this world.

Mr. T.J. Weems, the United States signal service officer at this place and an authority on astronomy, gave it as his opinion that he was a native of the planet Mars.

Papers found on his person-evidently the record of his travels-are written in some unknown hieroglyphics, and can not be deciphered.

The ship was too badly wrecked to form any conclusion as to its construction or motive power. It was built of an unknown metal resembling somewhat a mixture of aluminum and silver, and it must have weighed several tons.

The town is full of people today who are viewing the wreck and gathering specimens of the strange metal from the debris. The pilot's funeral wil take place at noon tomorrow". (110) Because modern analysis of metal fragments found at the crash site proved inconclusive-and because local authorities have denied permission for investigators to excavate the town cemetery in search of "Martian" remains-many people have written the whole incident off as an imaginative hoax.

There is, however, some additional corroboration for the story in the form of recently-uncovered testimony by several individuals who lived in the Aurora area at the time of the incident.

According to the son of one al eged eyewitness to the crash:

"My daddy said he was putting the cows out to pasture on our ranch about 4:00 a.m. three miles south of Aurora when he noticed a cigar-shaped airship with a white light pass over. It was very low, and just went straight ahead until it crashed

at a wel site on a hil on Judge J. S. Proctor's farm. He said there seemed to be an explosion and afire that lit up the sky for several minutes.

The next day, my father rode a horse into Aurora to look at the scene, and said it looked like a mass of torn metal and burned rubble". (111)

Recal ed another old-timer:

"We got the report early in Lewisvil e. Two friends wanted me to ride over to Aurora, but I had to work.

When they got back that night, they told me the airship had been seen coming from the direction of Dal as, but no one knew what it was. They said it hit something near Judge Proctor's wel . The airship was destroyed, and the pilot in it was badly torn up.

My friends said there was a big crowd of sightseers who were picking up pieces of the exploded airship. But no one could identify the metal it was made of.

They said it was difficult to describe the pilot, They saw only a torn-up body. I don't know what happened to the pilot's body. They didn't say". (112)

And a woman who was a young child at the time of the incident recounted her parents' visit to the scene: "When they returned home, they told me how the airship had exploded. The pilot was torn up and kil ed in the crash. The men of the town who gathered up his remains said he was a "smal man."

(They) buried him that same day in Aurora.

That crash certainly caused a lot of excitement. Many people were frightened. They didn't know what to expect. That was years before we had any regular airplanes or other kinds of airships". (113) Final y, there's an intriguing 1899 case involving what may have been the first recorded abduction of a human by a UFO. The story was related to a Catholic priest by an elderly Mexican man on his deathbed in 1966.

The man claimed that as a boy of 14 he was part of a posse searching for stolen cattle in the mountains of northern Mexico south of Tucson, Arizona in September, 1899, when "a huge, silver bowl in the sky flew ahead of the posse in spurts, staying about a half-mile ahead at al times."

The American lawman in charge of the posse ordered the group to split up and "try to find that damned airship again." It was then that the witness said "a tiny man in silver-colored clothes confronted him with a hol ow tube."

Feeling threatened by the strange humanoid, the boy drew his revolver and fired six shots into the creature. The result astonished him: "The little man flickered like a candle flame and disappeared."

The boy hurriedly rejoined the rest of the posse and related his experience to the others. The American lawman set off alone to investigate. About an hour later, recounted the boy, the "silver bowl rose 200 feet into the air and took off over the horizon."

When the posse rode to the area where they'd seen the UFO ascend, they found the lawman's horse, but no sign of the man himself. An Apache tracker with the group said the depth of the animal's hoofprints indicated the man had left the horse at a certain point. However, there were no bootprints at the spot indicating he'd dismounted and proceeded on foot. The posse searched the area for several days, but found no trace of the missing lawman. (114)

Chapter 3

UFO: 1900-1909

As the 19th Century turned into the 20th, the mystery airships turned from an ail-American show into an international phenomenon. During the first decade of the new mil ennium, dirigible-like craft of unknown origin were reported in the skies of the United States, Britain, Ireland, Wales, Sweden, Russia, Australia and New Zealand.

In this country, there was a flock of mysterious aerial visitors over California's Imperial Val ey in 1905. A local newspaper account described the encounter of a Silshee resident who watched in awe as a bril iant airborne light approached him one night:

"He watched it closely until behind the light there appeared the form of an airship, apparently about 70 feet in length, with a searchlight in front and several other lights aboard.

The mysterious machine appeared to be propel ed by wings alone, and rose and fel as the wings flapped like a gigantic bird. Apparently there was no bal oon attachment as is usual y the case with

airships.Mr. Jackson, being close to the home of W.E. Wilsie, woke him up in time to see the lights of the machine before it disappeared". (115)

Another published account reported that "a number of ranchers irrigating their fields at night also saw the airship at a distance," and one man who observed the craft in daylight described it as "a titanic white bird." (116)

The fol owing year (1906), a South Dakota farm boy told of watching as a strange craft landed near the family wel . "A door rol ed back, and I was welcomed inside," he said. He described his hosts as normal-looking men who "sat on camp stools."

They told the boy the outer shel of the craft contained "helium gas," and explained that "when the lever was moved, the magnetism from the earth was cut

off." Before leaving, the occupants took water for "making electricity." (117)

A couple of years later, mystery airship activity in this country shifted to the New England states.

One of the first sightings occurred over Bristol, Connecticut in July of 1908, as recounted in the fol owing item from an area newspaper at the time:

"A large airship sailing very high passed over the eastern part of this town about 6 o'clock this evening. After maneuvering for a short time, (it) took a westerly course, apparently moving toward Waterbury.

The craft is described as an elongated gas bag under which was suspended a framework equipped with a propel er. Spectators were sure that they saw one man aboard, but were not positive whether he had a companion.

The airship appeared to come out of the north and continued its southerly course over the town until it reached Lake Compounce. Over the lake, it stopped and appeared to be seeking a place for a landing.

After circling about a few times, however, it again came north, and then changing its course, moved in a westerly direction over Wolcott Mountain. At that time it was apparently descending, and it was thought when it disappeared that it might have made a landing on the mountain.

Persons who fol owed it and made the journey up the mountain found no trace of it. It is supposed that the airship continued its westerly course. Nothing could be learned as to its identity". (118) In October of that same year, two men logged a detailed description of the airship they spotted over Bridgewater, Massachusetts:

"We saw the light over the Stanley works. We stopped the team, and for ten minutes watched it, and saw it was moving and coming nearer and nearer to earth.

At last, we caught a glimpse of the shape of the bal oon. We shouted towards it, but heard no response or sound of any sort. I could see the outline of the large bag, for it remained stationary and then moved up and down seemingly at the wil of some individual.

The bal oon dropped down, and the light moved about, as though they were trying to get their bearings. Then it slowly rose and moved directly to the east, or

slightly south of east. We fol owed it with our eyes for a long time.

Even after I got home, I sat in my room and watched it from the window for half to three-quarters of an hour. I knew that from the direction it was going it would reach the sea in 25 miles or so, and I expected to see it drop down.

It did not drop. Instead, it kept steadily on. I was surprised at how straight a line it kept. I claim that a hot-air bal oon could not move in a circle or perpendicular as this one did". (119) In August of the fol owing year (1909), witnesses near Middletown, New York added some new details to the description of the airship they observed, as reported in the fol owing contemporary newspaper account:"A mysterious airship which flies only at night is causing considerable excitement and keeping the people of Orange County residing between Goshen and Newburg up nights in their efforts to get a look at it.

For the past month, persons who have been out late at night have reported seeing an airship, but few believed the stories. For a week or more, the flying machine had not been seen. But at 11 o'clock last night, it made its appearance near Goshen. It was flying high in the air and carried a light which attracted attention. It flew very fast, and was last seen traveling in the direction of Newburg.

Those who have seen the machine say it is shaped like a bal oon and has wings on each side and a cigar-shaped car underneath. The sound of a motor was distinctly heard". (120) By December of 1909, the mysterious sky visitors were back in 1 Massachusetts. The fol owing is from a contemporary newspaper account of two sightings in Marlboro on the evening of the 16th:

"One of the most positive proofs of the existence of the airship comes from ex-councilman B.W.

Johnson, who says he saw the airship in the south-western part of the city, and that it came down so low that he could hear a man talking from the craft.

A young man named Beauregard is an authority for the statement that on the same night, the airship landed on the southern side of Lake Wil iams. (121)

Here's how a Boston newspaper described the aerial show watched by thousands of amazed Christmas shoppers in that city on the evening of the 23rd:

"At first, those who saw the lights took them for some unusual y bright star shining through the hazy atmosphere. The two strong searchlights were distinguished from the blurred outline as they flashed among the buildings on Beacon Street.

Visible for a few minutes, the lights disappeared again and were shortly seen above the Common, crossing over the Charles Street mal . Many of the skaters in the Public Gardens were attracted by the lights and left the ice to join the throngs of shoppers who forgot their errands to watch the strange sight.

The lights moved so quickly that they soon outdistanced the fol owing crowd, and served to put to rest the belief that they might have come from a large bal oon. At times, when seen from what was taken to be the side of the machine, the lights had the appearance of automobile headlights, casting a bright glow as from a reflection. Then they were seen head on, and the vague outline of an aerial craft was barely discernible between the two lights, which seemed to be on either end.

At the height of 600 feet, which the airship maintained, the lights looked scarcely (six feet) apart, shining with a brightness greater than that of the moon. Above the Common, the lights remained apparently stationary for somewhat less than half an hour". (122) One other curious aspect of the New England mystery airship wave of 1908-1909 needs to be mentioned. Intermingled with the sightings of mostly dirigible-like objects were a number of reports of what appeared to be airplane-type craft which, given the stil primitive state of heavier-than-air technology at the time, were equal y out of place. The story of these and other anomalous airplanes that appeared in periodic waves in succeeding years is covered in the Postscript.

Meanwhile, mystery airship activity was taking off overseas, including in the British Isles.

In October of 1908, two commercial fishermen said they communicated in a fashion with a

"sausage-shaped" aircraft they encountered one night about 35 miles at sea. The incident began when the two men noticed a "large star" approaching their boat, and lit a white flare to get a better look at the object. To their surprise, the object responded with a red flare. The men promptly set off a second flare, which was immediately answered by a blue flare from the unidentified aircraft. That's as far

as their rudimentary communication progressed, however. A few minutes later, the object flew off toward the open sea. (123)

In March of the fol owing year (1909), a London policeman provided the fol owing statement describing his sighting over the British capital:

"I heard what I took to be a motorcar some 400 yards distant. It was quite dark at the time, and I looked along Cromwel Road expecting to see the lights of an approaching car. Nothing appeared, but I could stil hear the steady buzz of a high-powered engine.

Suddenly, it struck me that the sound was coming from above, and I looked up. My eye was at once attracted by a powerful light, which I should judge to have been some 1,200 feet above the ground.

I also saw a dark body, oblong and narrow in shape, outlined against the stars.

It was traveling at a tremendous pace. As I watched, the rattle of the engines gradual y grew fainter and fainter, until it disappeared in the northwest". (124) Less than a month later, a farmhand described a similar encounter in the Norfolk countryside:

"I heard a whirring noise overhead, and when I looked up, I saw the fields round were lit up by a bright light. I was startled, and wondered whatever it could he.

Then I saw that the light came from a long, dark airship which was traveling swiftly overhead. It was low down-only a little way above the trees-so I could see it plainly. It seemed to be 80 or 100 feet long, and I could distinguish two men on a kind of hanging platform below.

The searchlight lit up the road, the farm buildings, the trees and everything it touched, so that it was like day. I could even read the printing on some bil s on the wal .

It was traveling very fast against the wind, and it was out of sight in to few minutes". (125) About three weeks after this incident, three motorists reported their own nighttime encounter in Northhamptonshire:

"We heard the loud report in the air, like the backfire of a motorcar. Then we heard distinctly from above our heads the "tock-tock-tock" of a swiftly-running

motor engine, and we looked up.

I was sitting in the front seat next to the driver, and had a clear view of a dark shape looming up out of the night. It was an oblong airship, with lights in front and behind, flying swiftly through the air.

It seemed some 500 or 600 feet up, and must have been at least 100 feet long. The lights were not very bright, but we could distinctly see the torpedo shape, and what appeared to be men on the platform below". (126)

That same night, there occurred the first of two dramatic encounters involving landed airships and their occupants. Two men were quoted in a London newspaper tel ing how they came upon a strange craft in a city park:

"We were near the middle of the common on a fairly open space 150 yards from the road. I said to my friend, "Sit down a minute. I have a stone in my shoe." We sat down on the grass, and I suddenly heard a soft buzzing noise behind me. I thought it was a motorcar in the distance.

Then suddenly I saw it creeping along the surface of the grass. I could see the shape dimly. It looked like a col ection of big cigar boxes with the ends out. It must have been 200 or 250 feet long.

There were two men on the aeroplane. The first man, who was near the forepart, seemed to be in a sort of steel wire cage, and had a row of handles in front of him. The moment they saw us, this first man, who was cleanshaven and looked like a Yankee, turned the searchlight on us, blinding us with the glare. The second man, who stood in the middle of the airship, looked like a German, and was smoking a calabash pipe.

They were on the ground quite close to us, and I went up to them. The German spoke first. He said, "I am sorry. Have you any tobacco?"

I just happened to have an once or so in my pouch, and I gave it to him.

He said, "Wil you accept a pipe for it?" and I said I would. He gave me the pipe.

The German gentleman had a cap and a beard, and a map in front of him. It was fastened on a board, and there were red discs on it, as though they had been stuck in the map with pins.

The airship was showing no light when it descended. They switched the searchlight on and saw us.

The man at the searchlight was a tal fel ow with a blue serge suit. The other man had a fur-lined overcoat and a soft hat.

Parts of the airship appeared to be made of some light-colored metal-aluminum I think. It was nothing like a bal oon. It was pure aeroplane. There seemed to be some steel rods which stuck out and kept the airship upright and the propel ers off the ground.

The German leaned over the wire railing to talk to me, and I had to reach up to give him the tobacco. We saw the tal man pull one of the levers down, and then he switched the light off.

The aeroplane went without either of the men saying goodbye. It disappeared in 10 seconds, and was gone before we could see where it had gone to". (127)

A second incident five days later involved less sociable occupants of a landed airship. It reportedly occurred on a mountaintop in Wales, and was recounted by the lone witness:

"When I was turning the bend at the summit, I was surprised to see a long, tube-shaped affair lying on the grass on the roadside, with two men busily engaged with something nearby.

They attracted my close attention because of their peculiar getup. They appeared to have big, heavy fur coats, and fur caps fitting tightly over their heads.

I was rather frightened, but I continued to go on until I was within 20 yards of them, and then my idea as to their clothing was confirmed.

The noise of my little spring cart seemed to attract them, and when they saw me they jumped up and jabbered furiously to each other in a strange lingo-Welsh or something else. It was certainly not English. They hurriedly col ected something from the ground.

The long thing on the ground rose up slowly, and when it was hanging a few feet off the ground, the men jumped into a kind of little carriage suspended from it. Gradual y the whole affair and the men rose into the air in a zigzag fashion.

When they cleared the telegraph wires that pass over the mountain, two lights like electric lamps shone out. The thing went higher into the air, and sailed away towards Cardiff.

They were two tal , smart young men. I am certain that they did not speak English, for when they looked towards me, they spoke very loudly to each other, as if quarreling or excited.

When the thing went into the air, I distinctly saw what looked like a couple of wheels on the bottom of the little carriage. At the tail end of it was a fan whirring away as you hear a motorcar do sometimes". (128)

In the midst of widespread speculation that sinister foreigners (principal y Germans) were behind these mystery airship incidents, an Englishman stepped forward to claim responsibility.

According to an article in a contemporary London newspaper:

"In a private park little more than an hour's motor ride from London, there is lying what we are now informed is the wonderful phantom airship of the glaring eyes and whirring machinery that struck terror into the hearts of Peterborough policemen and electrified signalmen of South Wales".

The individual behind this marvelous apparatus was a doctor of science and philosophy by the name of M.B. Boyd who, the paper said, "had been perfecting airship inventions for eight years."

Dr. Boyd was quoted in the article as saying his airship was 120 feet long and powered by 300-horsepower gasoline engines with a maximum range of some 1,400 miles.

Said Boyd:

"It was our airship that was seen by the signalman at Cardiff docks and by the good people of Northampton on 15 May. We were also responsible for the astonishment created a week previously among Great Eastern Railway porters within 10 miles of London".

He also claimed a round-trip flight to northern Ireland:

"That was the occasion when we completed our longest flight. The distance from shore to shore is about 90 miles. We accomplished the journey in one night, in one continuous flight, and we attained an average speed of 32 miles per hour". (129)

However, this gentleman never produced an actual aircraft to support his claims.

As for the German theory, while the dirigibles being developed at the time by that country's Count Zeppelin matched the general description of the mystery airships seen in the British Isles, they fel considerably short of the speeds and nighttime flying capabilities attributed to the unknown aeronauts.

That same year (1909), mystery airships put in appearances in the skies above continental Europe as wel . In August, the Russian correspondent for a British newspaper reported that considerable excitement was caused by "an unknown control able airship" that circled over the city of Reval and then flew off in the direction of Finland. (130)

In September, an aircraft "of great size, el iptical-shaped, and equipped with wings of some kind"

flew over the Swedish cities of Gothenburg and Osthammer at an altitude of 300 feet. When last seen, it was headed west. (131)

Another major mystery airship hotspot of 1909 was located thousands of miles from the other areas where they appeared-in Australia and New Zealand.

Most of the sightings in New Zealand occurred during a two-month period from mid-July to mid-September. Many of the witnesses there described the objects they saw as resembling a flying boat, such as in the fol owing contemporary newspaper account of an incident involving two workmen:

"(They) saw a large, boat-shaped structure floating in the air. It appeared to he coming straight toward them. It dipped up and down with an easy motion. They had a good view of it.

Their first impressions as to its shape were confirmed. It was distinctly boat-shaped. They could see on the top of it what appeared to he a long pole. It continued with a dipping and ascending motion towards them for some time, and then swerved, recrossed the river and disappeared". (132) The participants in

another multiple-witness sighting gave even more detailed descriptions of the object they saw, as recounted in a local newspaper at the time:

"Thomas Jenkins gave a very clear account of the whole incident. He saw the vessel first at 12

o'clock as he was going home from school. It had come over the hil on the east side of the school and sailed across the plain to the gorge on the other side. He watched it al the time, and saw it altogether about 10 minutes. As it passed over, he saw that it had supports on each side, but these sails did not move. There was a wheel at the rear revolving very rapidly. There was a box beneath the body of the ship. The vessel was entirely black in color.

Cyril Falconer was with other boys on the school ground when the airship passed over. A big wheel was revolving at the rear. He saw this reversed, and the vessel suddenly turned.

Mrs. Russel , evidently the only adult who saw the phenomenon, said she saw a streak of blackness shoot over the hil and come straight towards her. Then it suddenly turned and swerved away over some trees out of her sight. In appearance it was just like a boat. It was black in color. It was traveling very fast at first, but when it turned, it came lower and went somewhat slower". (133) In another incident, a lone witness reported observing a large, boat-shaped object on a night so brightly lit by moonlight that he could discern two individuals inside the craft before it flew off at "a fast rate." (134)

Airship occupants were also observed by two men operating a river dredge near the town of Gore early one morning. They reported seeing two figures aboard a narrow, boat-shaped craft with lights at both ends that circled their work site for several minutes before it flew off at high speed leaving a yel ow glare in its wake. (135)

Another man claimed to have not only seen but also heard the occupants of an airship he said he saw one evening near the town of Waipawa:

"He was riding near the racecourse and his horse became restive. He discovered the cause was a large, torpedo-shaped structure passing over his head. The airship, he states, was painted grey. Three persons were visible, one of whom shouted out to him in an unknown tongue.

The ship rose to a great height, showing lights at prow and stern. After circling around, (it) disappeared behind a hil ". (136)

A New Zealand fisherman didn't actual y see occupants aboard the airship that flew above him at low altitude near Marlborough Sound, but claimed to have experienced their hostility. He said he was the target of "missiles" which dropped from the craft, hissed when they struck the water and fizzed before they sank. (137)

Another local man reported a friendlier encounter with the occupants of an airship that landed at Port Molyneux. He said several individuals who he thought looked like Japanese emerged and conversed with him (presumably in English). (138)

The final airship sightings in New Zealand occurred in early September. On the afternoon of the 1st, two prominent residents of Gore reported observing a cigar-shaped aircraft with a "car" attached. They said it drifted over some nearby hil s before flying off and disappearing from sight over the horizon.

A few days after this incident, the Gore correspondent of an area newspaper filed the fol owing story about another airship sighting:

"Between 5:45 and 6:15, it appeared in view, coming over the hil s on the eastern side of the town of Otaraia. It apparently sailed backwards and forwards at a great pace and, turning around, disappeared over the same hil s. It was subsequently seen in the direction of the Gore racecourse.

The children of a prominent resident also saw it, and stated that it was cigar-shaped. Reliable testimony to the sight is also borne by a party of golfers who were on their way home from the golf links when they saw it". (139)

Mystery airship sightings in nearby Australia partly overlapped those in New Zealand (spanning the period from August through October), and were almost exclusively nocturnal.

A sighting near the town of Glen Innes introduced a total y new shape to the mix, as reported by the local press at the time:

"Several responsible residents described an object like a bal oon moving in a northerly direction. A night glass was obtained, and the object was found to be shaped like an inverted top.

The lower portion was lighted, and as the body revolved, a light like a smal flashlight kept turning on the land beneath". (140)

One of the few daylight sightings in Australia also seemed to involve a completely different kind of craft. It was observed by several people on a ranch near Onslow in the western part of the country. One witness tried her best to describe the object:

"It looked compact, like a dirigible bal oon, but appeared to be squarer and more like an aeroplane. The sun shone on it, and flashes came from it, as though reflected from something revolving, or from metalwork". (141)

Nor were these the only UFOs reported in the world around this time that didn't fit either the cigar-shaped or boat-shaped airship mold. The same curious mixture of dirigible-type airships and more futuristic-looking "spaceships" seen during the last decades of the 19th Century continued to coexist for most of the first two decades of the 20th.

For example, a 1900 encounter in Wisconsin featured a UFO that resembled a dirigible in its general shape but clearly demonstrated characteristics not associated with dirigible-like airships.

The incident involved a teenage boy who was returning home one night when his horse suddenly began acting oddly. Glancing around the area, he spotted a large, dark dirigible-shaped object overhead.

As the craft passed by at low altitude, nearby trees bent like they were hit with a strong wind, and the witness heard a loud swishing sound coming from the UFO. It was several more minutes before his horse calmed down. (142)

A British youngster claimed a more interactive encounter with a UFO the fol owing year (1901), when he came upon an odd craft in the family garden. He described it as box-shaped with a turret on top and a door in one side.

Suddenly, two entities emerged through the doorway. They resembled normal-looking men, but stood less than four feet tal . They wore uniforms and had caps with a wire or antennae extending upward on each side. One of them walked a few steps toward the witness and made an arm motion the witness interpreted as a signal to move away. The two occupants then boarded the object, there was a bright flash and it ascended with a loud whooshing noise. (143)

A couple of years later (in 1903), a farm family in Indiana observed a strange object hovering above their neighbor's pasture near the town of Helmer. As the family's daughter recal ed later:

"(It was) a huge object like a gigantic cucumber with slightly tapered ends. (It was) bril iantly aglow despite the fact that the sun had set more than an hour before".

She added that on the side of the craft facing them, there were two rows of four lighted windows each. After hovering motionless for about five minutes, the object darted off, "zigzagging across the sky like a child's bal oon when you let go of the nozzle." (144) The fol owing year (1904), crewmembers of an American ship reported encountering what they cal ed "remarkable meteors" while steaming between San Francisco and Hawai . A U.S. Navy officer who interviewed the witnesses described the incident:

"The meteors appeared near the horizon and below the clouds, traveling directly toward the ship.

At first, their angular motion was rapid, and color a rather bright red.

As they approached the ship, they appeared to soar, passing above the clouds. The color became less pronounced as the meteors gained in elevation.

When sighted, the largest meteor was in the lead, fol owed by the second and third. They appeared to be traveling in echelon.

The largest was egg-shaped, the sharper end forward. This end was jagged in outline. The after end was regular and full in outline. The second and third meteors were round and showed no imperfections in shape". (145)

In 1905, a local doctor observed an unknown aerial object in the Romanian province of Bucovina that caused him "considerable anxiety." He said it was large, bril iantly-lit and saucer-shaped. He watched it fly out of sight in a westerly direction. (146)

The fol owing year (1906) the crew of a cargo ship reported a remarkable experience in the North Atlantic between Greenland and Newfoundland. The captain of the St. Andrew concluded what they'd encountered was a meteor, but as

the fol owing contemporary newspaper account reveals, the object in question exhibited some very non-meteor-like characteristics:

"The third engineer shouted to me. I saw a huge meteor on the port beam fal ing in a zigzag manner less than a mile away. It fel with a rocking motion, leaving a broad red streak in its wake.

The meteor must have weighed several tons, and appeared to be 10-to-15 feet in diameter. It was saucer-shaped. I have seen meteors al over the world, but never such a large one as this". (147) The zigzag movements and saucer shape are, of course, things not normal y associated with meteors or any other known natural phenomenon. If what the crew of the St. Andrew saw was an intel igently-guided craft, it's unclear whether they witnessed a crash or a control ed underwater entry.

Three years later (in 1909), a group of Indiana churchgoers witnessed a heavenly sight that may have made them true UFO believers. They were returning home from a service near the town of La Porte one night when they beheld a strange craft that resembled two bowls joined at the rims with a row of lights in the middle.

The incident began when the object suddenly appeared overhead and directed an eerie light down at the group's wagon, terrifying both people and horses. One witness described the light as "il uminated tentacles of phosphorescent color" with the "intensity of a giant flood bulb."

After what probably seemed like an eternity, the UFO disappeared as suddenly as it had arrived.

(148)

Final y, any discussion of possible UFO activity during the first decade of the 20th Century would be incomplete without examining the controversial Tunguska event of 1908.

On June 30th of that year, the Earth experienced a seismic shock greater than any known earthquake. Fortunately, the epicenter was located in a remote and largely uninhabited part of Russian Siberia. The blast was heard 750 miles away, and seismic shock waves were registered as far away as Washington, D.C. (149)

In England, night suddenly turned into day. "The Times" of London reported "the extraordinary occurrence of night trains running over the Grampion hil s without lights took place for the first time on record." One of the paper's readers wrote:

"I myself was aroused from sleep at 1:15 AM, and so strong was the light at this hour that I could read a book by it in my chamber quite comfortably.

At 1:45, the whole sky, north and northeast, was a vibrant salmon pink, and the birds began their matutinal song". (150)

In the area immediately surrounding ground zero, over 1,000 square miles of Siberian forest resembled Hiroshima after the atomic bomb was dropped, with mil ions of trees either flattened or snapped in two like giant matchsticks.

Horses were reportedly knocked off their feet 250 miles from Tunguska, roofs were blown from

houses hundreds of miles away, and a "black rain" of debris fel over a large area. Incredibly, there were no human deaths reported.

Russian eyewitnesses provided some revealing descriptions. A farmer living 40 miles from the site of the explosion reported:

"There appeared a great flash of light. There was so much heat that I was no longer able to remain where I was. My shirt almost burned off my back.

I saw a huge firebal that covered an enormous part of the sky. I only had a moment to note the size of it. Afterwards, it became dark. At the same time, I felt an explosion that threw me several feet from the porch.

I lost consciousness for a few moments. When I came to, I heard a noise that shook the whole house and nearly moved it off its foundations". (151)

Other eyewitnesses described a bal of fire "so bright that it made even the light from the sun seem dark." A few said the firebal was fol owed by the appearance of a mushroom-shaped pil ar of smoke that rose several miles high. (152)

Scientific opinion is sharply divided on what caused this widespread devastation. The theories include: a comet, meteor, asteroid, bolide, black hole, bal lightning, earthquake, tectonic electricity and the crash of a nuclear-powered spaceship.

Despite nearly a century of debate, there's no consensus on which if any of these competing theories is correct. For our purposes, we'll focus on the case for an errant nuclear spaceship.

Advocates of this hypothesis include a Russian scientistwha spent 17 years investigating the Tunguska incident. His studies convinced him that an airborne nuclear explosion was the most likely cause of the destruction.

Besides the tel tale mushroom-shaped cloud described by eyewitnesses, he determined that scientific readings recorded at the time of the explosion indicated the blast occurred not at ground level, but more than a mile above the Earth's surface; that there was no impact crater at the scene; and that there were markedly elevated levels of radioactivity in the area afterward. Other investigators learned that unique fused globules characteristic of nuclear explosions were also found at the scene. (153) Perhaps most significantly, some eyewitnesses reportedly observed a cylindrical-shaped object flying over the area and changing course several times before final y exploding in the air. (154) Chapter 4

UFO: 1910-1919

The decade from 1910 to 1919 witnessed the final curtain cal for dirigible-type mystery airships.

Their last hurrah came in the years leading up to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. It was around this

time that known dirigible development - in the form of Germany's zeppelins—final y caught up with the performance characteristics of the airships of unknown origin which had been cruising the world's skies so mysteriously since at least 1896.

The decade got off to a flying start when something strange began chugging through the skies of east Tennessee. The mystery craft-described by witnesses as a large, white cigar-shaped object-appeared above the Chattanooga area for three consecutive days in January of 1910.

It was estimated to be flying at a speed of about 30 miles per hour, and some observers thought they heard the faint noise of engines coming from it. Other witnesses claimed to see a line of flickering blue flames along the underside of the craft.

The object was last seen flying south in the direction of Alabama. Some 15 minutes later, the same or a similar-looking craft was spotted over the city of Huntsvil e, approximately 75 miles from Chattanooga. (155)

Around the same time, a newspaper in Chattanooga's neighboring city to the north-Knoxvil e-was reporting that two "wel -known citizens" observed "a large airship bound in a southerly direction":

"Sparks could be seen coming from its motors. The hum of machinery could be heard. The airship appeared to them to be a dirigible bal oon". (156)

The fol owing year (1911), a UFO paid a prolonged visit to the Canadian province of Ontario, as reported in a local newspaper at the time:

"A mysterious aircraft has been floating around this vicinity for some days. The air car, which is of enormous dimensions, has been sighted by several persons whose veracity goes unquestioned.

The strange part of the story is that this particular conveyance travels the ether without apparent planes, and seems capable of staying up for days. During the past three days, it has been sighted from several vil ages round about, but has never been known to alight.

Last night, it was seen by parties in Chatham Township when it was bril iant with lights. For a time, it floated along about 100 feet from the earth's surface. Then suddenly with a great whirring, it rose to a high altitude and soon disappeared in the distance". (157) By 1913, the focus of mystery airship activity had shifted across the Atlantic to the British Isles.

In January of that year, two men-one of them a policeman-became aware of an unknown aerial visitor when they heard the sound of a motor approaching the English coast. Then the civilian spotted an airborne light accompanying the sound.

In his report of the incident, the constable concluded:

"It could only have been a very powerfully-engined aircraft to have flown in such a wind, and daring airmanship was also involved in the flight". (158) Later that same month, something strange appeared over Cardiff, Wales, as reported by another policeman:

"At a quarter to five, I noticed the object. It was dusk and foggy, so that one could not define it.

It was much larger and moved faster than the Wil ows airship, and it left in its trail a dense volume of smoke.

I cal ed the attention of a bystander to the object, and he agreed it was some large object. It disappeared quickly". (159)

In February, other eyewitnesses in Wales were able to determine the outline of the mystery object they spotted. It was, they said, dirigible-shaped. (160)

That same month, a dirigible-like object was seen repeatedly in the nighttime skies of England. In one incident, it hovered low over a town for approximately 20 minutes and played a searchlight on the houses before flying off "at great speed." (161)

On another occasion, the crew of a fishing boat claimed an airship circled their trawler twice and shone a bright searchlight on them. (162)

In April, the mystery airship paid a return visit to Cardiff. One policeman in the Welsh capital estimated the object he saw was traveling at a rate somewhere between 60 and 70 miles per hour-an unheard-of speed for any dirigible in those days. (163)

In addition to these unknown dirigible-like craft, many other witnesses during the second decade of the 20th Century reported seeing more aerodynamic, higher performance type aerial objects of the kind most people envision when they think of modern UFOs.

For instance, there's the fol owing experience of a young boy near Greer, Idaho one night in February of 1910:

"My house lighted up like sunlight. I went outside, and saw a large yel ow globe which I thought was a meteor. But it was traveling so slowly and wel below the canyon rim that I soon changed my mind.

It passed so low over my head that I could not see over its curve to its top. However, I had plenty of time to see that it was a perfect globe, made of a substance like highly-polished gold in color—

not bright itself, but lighting up the canyon like sunshine and reflecting back the lighted wal s against itself.

This globe was not less than one-half mile in diameter. It traveled south fol owing the canyon of the Clearwater. Almost directly across the river from me, (it) curved around a jutting hil as a plane would do.

There were no openings, no visible ports or observation blisters. No rockets, no vapor, no sound

of motors. But a strong draft fol owed it as it would fol ow a train or other moving body. Only the sound of the wind was perceptible.

I watched this globe travel about 10 miles. It was not over 2,000 feet up, and missing jutting peaks and ridges in a manner showing easy control". (164) That same year (1910), a young brother and sister encountered an equal y enigmatic object near their home in Fulton County, Arkansas, as recal ed by the woman years later:

"We saw a bright object hovering just above the trees about 50 yards from us. It was silver-colored and shaped like a zeppelin, but not quite as big. It had nothing hanging from the underside.

We stood frozen to the ground, not seeing anything like that before. We thought whoever was inside was watching us. There were no windows.

When it took off, we saw it start up. (Then) it completely vanished before our eyes.

We cal ed it a bal oon. When I saw a real bal oon, I knew what Jack and I saw wasn't a bal oon".

(165) A couple of years later (in 1912), three teenagers in Alameda, California saw a group of UFOs flying in formation, as recounted later by one of the witnesses:

"They were less than a mile away. It was a clear, sunny day, about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. They were traveling in a vertical formation, one precisely over the other.

They were perfectly round, and a pale green in color. The shading of the color made them appear as if they were discs on edge, and not globular. There were no indications of openings of any sort. They made no noise or left any vapor trails. I would say that they were at least 75-to-100 feet in diameter".

(166) The folowing year (1913), an unknown aerial object was seen in the skies over Lansing, Michigan, as reported in a local newspaper at the time:

"What is thought to have been either an airship or a very fast traveling bal oon passed over Lansing about sunset Sunday evening and created some little excitement owing to the mystery surrounding the aircraft.

The object appeared in the southeast and was first sighted a mile south of the race track. The craft traveled swiftly through the air, taking a direct course north until it had reached about the central western part of the city, when it altered its course to the northwest.

So swiftly did the strange craft travel that it was not more than three minutes from the time it was sighted southeast of the city until it had passed from vision in the northwest.

The aerial mystery carried no lights of any description, and was too elongated for an ordinary bal oon, it is said. The craft was at a great height, and when it passed on the northwest of the city had reached a stil higher altitude". (167)

The recol ection of one eyewitness clearly put the object more in the category of a modern UFO

than a dirigible-type airship:

"Glancing up, I was surprised to see a golden-colored, oval-shaped object traveling eastward much more rapidly than anything with which we were then familiar. It was perfectly delineated and was wel lighted by the setting sun, which would probably account for its golden hue.

When it passed due south of me, it was about a half-mile away, approximately 500 feet up, and doing what I would judge to be 100 or 200 miles per hour.

With shouts, I attracted the attention of my parents and the neighbors, and they al viewed it with surprise and alarm. "Must be a meteor" was the verdict, because

that was about the only term applicable in our vocabulary in that time.

It was better than 100 feet in diameter, and moved without a sound. It traveled much too fast for any bal oon. It was definitely a UFO". (168)

During the early part of World War I (either 1914 or 1915), a vil age in Romania experienced a dramatic week-long series of visits by a UFO. One witness said the object was footbal -shaped with an

"exhaust pipe." It was surrounded by a reddish glow, and left a trail of glowing sparks in its wake.

On one occasion, it passed over the vil age at an altitude of about 75 feet, making a whistling

noise and creating a wind that bent trees in its path.

Another time, the UFO hovered over one of the homes in the vil age. When it departed, a woman inside the house was found covered with burns. (169)

In 1917, a newspaper in Salida, Colorado reported that a local clergyman made an unusual aerial observation while looking through his telescope: "(It was) an object which appeared to be a wheel. While the wheel seemed to revolve or move about, varied colored lights appeared". (170) The fol owing year (1918), a group of soldiers were astonished to see a UFO appear over their Army base in Waco, Texas. The object was described as cigar-shaped and between 100 and 150 feet long. But that's evidently where its resemblance to a dirigible ended. According to one eyewitness:

"It came directly overhead and was no more than 500 feet high, so we got an excel ent view of it.

It had no motors (and) no rigging. It was noiseless. I could observe no windows. It was a rose or sort of flame color.

We al experienced the weirdest feeling of our lives, and sat in our tent puzzling over it for some time". (171)

There were also several sightings of what could be cal ed modern-type UFOs reported in World War I combat zones.

In 1916, three British infantrymen in France observed something that one of them at first thought

"looked like a zeppelin" hovering over their trenches. But then, he said, "it suddenly darted forward at a pace which must have been 200 miles per hour." (172)

In 1917, an American soldier serving in an anti-aircraft bal oon unit recorded an encounter with a disc-shaped UFO in France:

"Our unit was to put up bal oons to keep the (Germans) from flying over. Jed shouted and pointed up. There was something that looked like a giant mess plate just hanging over the field, directly over one of the (tanks). Suddenly, it rose straight up without making a sound until it faded into the clouds. We were al questioned about what we had seen. They told us not to talk about this to anyone, but the (Germans) had a new super zeppelin, and we were seeing the observation car hanging down from it.

We al accepted this, but years later I came to doubt it. What we saw was big, and it would've taken a very big zeppelin to carry it". (173)

Some witnesses during this period reported seeing more than strange aerial objects. They also told of observing unusual occupants in and around the craft.

In 1910, three people observed a UFO hovering over a basebal field in Baltimore, Maryland.

And the craft's strange-looking occupants were apparently observing the witnesses in return.

The object was cigar-shaped, brown, over 100 feet long and appeared metal ic. The craft, which was some 200 feet from the witnesses, featured a row of rectangular windows of various colors along its side. One window was clear, and behind it the witnesses could make out odd creatures apparently taking turns peering out. They did this in groups of two or three at a time. The witnesses thought there must have been about 20 creatures in al .

These curious creatures wore fur-like clothing of a light color and what looked like conical helmets.

They had smal , round eyes and slitlike mouths. (174)

Two years later (in 1912), a young boy claimed a much closer encounter with UFO occupants in western Canada. He said a round craft landed on his family's farm and examined him.

The witness described the ufonauts as short with round feet and no knees or elbows. He said they communicated with him telepathical y. (175)

Another curious account puts a landed UFO and its diminutive occupants in a remote Eskimo vil age near Koyuk, Alaska around 1913. According to native stories handed down from generation to generation, the three ufonauts were stranded there approximately a century earlier when their "silvery disc that sailed through the air" became permanently disabled.

The trio of aerial travelers, who were said to possess great strength for their size, learned to speak

the native language and lived with the Eskimo. They were described as elderly in 1913, and presumably died a few years later. (176)

The occupants of a UFO that landed near Hamburg, Germany in 1914 were less sociable. A local man spotted four or five of them in a field near his house. He said they were about four feet tal , and stood beside a glowing, cigar-shaped craft with lighted windows.

When the witness walked toward them, the occupants retreated inside the object and a door closed behind them. The craft then rose straight up without making a sound. (177) Two months later (in August of 1914), there were nine witnesses to a purposeful UFO that landed on the surface of Georgian Bay near the Canadian side of Lake Huron. In the words of one of them:

"Near the middle of the bay was a strange machine of a type I had not seen the likes of before nor since.

I would say that this strange machine was about nine feet high and 12 feet long. On top of the ship were two little men dressed in green and purple tight-fitting clothes. Square yel ow masks which seemed to rest on their shoulders covered their faces.

A light green-colored hose appeared to come out of a smal porthole about halfway up the side of the unusual craft. The two little creatures appeared to be trying to get some kinks or knots out of the hose, which was dragging in the water.

Their task accomplished, three more creatures appeared on the topmost deck of the craft and began adjusting some type of rods which were affixed to the upper part of the ship. After what was probably two or three minutes, the five beings went inside the ship by way of the porthole from which the hose was extended.

The ship then rose from the bay surface, sucking with it a heavy upsurge of water which sprayed the entire sea, leaving a mist above which did not settle for some time.

As the ship continued to move straight up, it changed color from red to green, and then made a tight left turn and flew off on its side". (178)

The witnesses in the case just described didn't get close enough to judge the demeanor of the occupants they saw, but the lone witness in another landing case in Norway the fol owing year (1915) reported the occupants he encountered seemed friendly.

The incident began when the man observed a dark-colored, bel -shaped object land behind a hil .

A few moments later, he was startled to see two smal humanoids emerge from behind the hil and walk a few steps in his direction.

The witness later described the pair as about three feet tal and dressed in brown or dark-colored garments resembling coveral s. One of the entities came nearer to the witness and appeared to smile at him. He said it had a disproportionately large head with long, wavy hair and gray skin.

The two creatures then turned and walked back behind the hil . A short while later, the witness saw the object rise into the air and fly off at high speed. (179) Sometime during World War I (in either 1916 or 1917), a woman observed an unusual UFO in Suffolk, England. She described it as a round platform with a railing, and estimated the object was about 13 feet in diameter and was flying at a height of about 30 feet. It came from the direction of nearby marshes, and she got a good look at it from a second-floor window of her house.

The woman said there were approximately a dozen "men" standing on the platform, holding onto a handrail. They were dressed similarly in "blue uniforms and little round hats, not unlike sailors' hats."

The craft began to approach the woman's house, then turned and disappeared behind nearby trees and houses. The witness detected no sound from the object. (180) The landed UFO encountered by a Pennsylvania man in 1917 was of more "traditional" design.

He spotted it while walking along a railroad track between Mt. Braddock and Youngstown one autumn night.

The object sitting in a pasture about 100 feet from the witness was "about the size of a car" and

"saucer-shaped" with a "dome" on top. There were several rows of oval or oblong windows through which

he could see figures moving around inside the craft.

After observing the UFO for several minutes, the witness said it took off at a gradual angle with a

"high-pitched, sharp sound." (181)

A chance encounter with a landed UFO and its occupant a couple of years later (in 1919) didn't end as wel for a man in western Australia.

The witness was walking along a rural road when he came upon a "man" who appeared to be repairing a strange-looking craft of some kind. As he approached, the individual looked up at him, apparently startled by his presence. The stranger then pointed something at the witness, knocking him unconscious. When the stunned man came to, the stranger and his machine were nowhere to be seen.

(182)

That same year (1919), a young brother and sister experienced a more benign encounter with some unusual visitors to their family's farm near Webster City, Iowa. As the girl recal ed the incident:

"We saw a brown-green object beneath the tree near the creek about 75 feet from us. We ran toward it before noticing a figure in green-brown.

(He was) stern looking (and) standing in the door which had been lowered to the ground and had steps. He startled us by making strange guttural sounds.

Then we noticed a shorter figure in the same clothes running toward the stream. He went very fast (and) dipped up some water in what looked like a tin can about the size of a soup can.

The big one hustled the little one into the vehicle, and the door slammed shut. It made a metal ic sound when it closed.

The vehicle rose straight up very fast. The top of the vehicle hit the tree limbs and broke a few smal branches off. Then (it) went sidewise and over the hil with its three legs stil down-no lights, no sound. We folowed up the hil, but it soon left us and was out of sight. We went back to where it landed. The soil in a wide area was covered with round spots that resembled cane marks". (183) Chapter 5

UFO: 1920-1929

By the decade of the 1920s, UFOs of the "spaceship" variety had assumed exclusive control of the world's skies, never again having to share the spotlight with their more primitive, dirigible-type counterparts of earlier years.

In 1920, a man reportedly observed a formation of four disc-shaped UFOs near the Texas gulf coast. He later described the craft that approached to within about 100 yards of him as he was night fishing:

"The first and last discs showed a bril iant pink pastel light. The second and third glowed a pale green that was just as bril iant.

These things looked exactly like two big silver plates set edge to edge. (They) appeared to be about 25 feet in diameter, and some 10 feet thick at the center". (184) That same year, some 200 people observed a large, cylindrical-shaped UFO between Wathena, Kansas and Rushvil e, Missouri. Witnesses estimated the object was flying at a height of about 75 feet.

The craft executed a sharp turn over Rushvil e and disappeared into a nearby cloud. (185) A couple of years later (in 1922), a young boy in Prairie Grove

Arkansas had a UFO experience that created an indelible memory for the rest of his life. When he later married, he told the story to his wife:

"Looking up from his play, he saw an object in the air about two or three hundred feet above the shade trees. The object was about the size of the automobiles that grownups rode in on the streets".

The witness described the object as hat-shaped, with a large central dome mounted on a round brim. (186)

The fol owing year (1923), a family living in Benton, Illinois observed a fascinating unscheduled airshow, compliments of a UFO. The incident was recounted by one of them years later:

"One evening after supper, we went out in front of our house to play, when we noticed something like a smal cloud in the cloudless sky. The cloud was getting closer, and I said, "There's something in the sky." It was coming from the north, not very high in the sky. It slowed down like a top, and flew low around the old fairground. (It) then came back by the Grant School west to the electrical poles, stopping before crossing the railroad tracks. It came to a stop about the height of the treetops.

(Then) the lights came on around the bottom edge-red, blue, green and ecru. The ecru light or spotlight was very bright. It seemed like a few minutes before the spotlight was turned off.

It moved nearer the electric poles. Then it rose up high in the sky, then began to descend slowly until it landed across the railroad tracks.

It was about as high as a phone pole when the bottom moved, and four lights came on. Then a pil ar of light came out of it. I looked away for a minute, and when I looked back it was gone.

It was years before I saw a picture of a UFO, and then I knew the mystery object I had seen was a UFO". (187)

General aviation was stil in its fledgling stage in 1926, and it was rare for pilots to encounter another aircraft in the skies. Such an encounter by an airmail pilot in the fal of that year was made al the more remarkable by the unusual nature of the other craft that repeatedly buzzed his plane near Salt Lake City, Utah.

The startled aviator described his unwelcome visitor as a cylinder-shaped object without wings or a propel er. He estimated its size as 90 feet in length and 8-to-10 feet in diameter.

He claimed whenever the object came within about 50 yards of his plane, his engine sputtered and misfired. He eventual y decided to make a forced landing in a sheep pasture. Once on the ground, he said the UFO "took off like a shot out of a gun" and disappeared in a "few seconds." (188) Another pioneer pilot during the 1920s claimed he encountered a formation of half a dozen UFOs one day while he was barnstorming through the Southwest. According to a friend he related the incident to:

"They seemed to be about 200 yards away, and they looked just like manhole covers.

He told us how they flew alongside him for five minutes or so, and had no trouble keeping up with him. In fact, they "rabbled" along beside him, and final y turned, changed course and flew away.

Bert said he had never seen anything like it before. He had no idea what the things were, but he had no doubt that they were very real". (189)

In 1927, a woman believed she observed a strangely animated UFO over Marin County, California:

"I saw a cigar-shaped craft shoot out of a cloud and across the sky toward Tamalpais. At first, I thought it must be a (dirigible), but soon changed my mind. It was not shaped like (a dirigible).

It was long and slender, of yel ow color, and traveling at great speed. As it came opposite me, it seemed to progress by alternately contracting and elongating its body". (190) A youngster got a much closer look at a different style of UFO near his home in West Frankfort, Illinois that same year when he noticed a revolving, flashing disc-shaped object flying noiselessly toward him. The UFO came to a stop approximately 100 feet from where he was standing and hovered over a house. Its revolving motion then ceased.

The witness described the object as about 40 feet in diameter, and said it looked like it was made of stainless steel. It had a gondola-like section on its underside in

which four or five round windows now appeared, blue-white light shining from them.

Next, the UFO moved about 100 feet and extended a thin rod or wire from its underside. Then the windows closed in a motion that reminded the witness of the "iris shutter of a modern-day camera,"

and the object began to revolve once more. It proceeded to fly away in the direction from which it had arrived. (191)

The fol owing year (1928), two brothers were driving some cattle across the prairie at night near Milton, North Dakota when they observed an object resembling "a soup bowl turned upside down." It was flying along about 15 or 20 feet above the ground, il uminating the path ahead of it with four or five rays of light projected from the craft.

The witnesses estimated the UFO was 20-to-25 feet in diameter, and said it appeared to be made of polished metal. At one point, when the object came within 100 feet or so of the men, they distinctly heard a noise coming from it which they later likened to the sound of air coming out of a tube.

(192)

UFO sightings during the 1920s weren't limited to this country alone.

In 1922, a group of soldiers holed up in a cave during the Irish civil war heard a whirring noise outside and made the mistake of shooting at an object they thought was an enemy armored car. A man who came upon the scene a short time later described what the witnesses said happened next:

"The object retaliated by firing jets of flame at the cave. The defenders had to withdraw in face of the fierce heat. Al the undergrowth was now ablaze and the smoke was bil owing into the cave, so that it was a case of facing the flame throwers or suffocating to death.

When they ran out of the entrance, the soldiers saw the flame-throwing object beginning to ascend into the sky. It was clearly visible in the first light of dawn-circular in shape and bright in appearance, as if made of aluminum". (193)

The mysterious phenomenon most often associated with Lake Okanogan in the Canadian province of British Columbia is a local version of the Loch Ness Monster cal ed Ogopogo. But for a man sitting in a rowboat on the lake around dusk one day in 1924, the chil s came not from beneath the water but above it.

Here's how he later described the incident:

"The body was distinctly visible against the faint remaining sunlight. As it came further, it reduced speed and dropped lower until it was only about 300 feet off the water. It passed my boat at about 200

feet distant, and at a speed of perhaps 30 or 40 miles per hour.

There was just enough skylight left to give an indication of a pearly silver body color. The body gave off no light of its own, but some faint dark blue light was visible at the rear. As the rear view turned more into visible position, an intense blue light of somewhat paler color, and having variations suggestive of a rectangular grid pattern, became visible.

After a quarter mile of level travel past my boat, this craft turned to a climb of from 45 to 60

degrees, then accelerated so terrifical y that even its light disappeared in just a few seconds". (194) In 1926, a Russian adventurer in northern China logged the fol owing entry in his journal for August 5th:

"Something remarkable! In the morning about half-past nine, some of our caravaneers noticed a remarkably big black eagle flying above us. Seven of us began to watch this unusual bird. At the same moment, another of our caravaneers remarked, "There is something far above the bird."

We al saw, in a direction from north to south, something big and shiny reflecting the sun, like a huge oval moving at great speed. Crossing our camp, this thing changed in its direction from south to southwest. And we saw how it disappeared in the intense blue sky.

We even had time to take our field glasses, and saw quite distinctly an oval form with shiny surface, one side of which was bril iant from the sun". (195) The fol owing year (1927) saw a pair of interesting UFO sightings from widely-separated parts of the world. In the first incident, numerous witnesses observed a strange

cylindrical object as it flew over a vil age in Romania on a clear day with good visibility.

One of the observers was an engineer who estimated the object was between 50 and 65 feet long and 10-to-13 feet in diameter. He said it was smoke gray in color and passed over the vil age silently at an altitude of less than 1,000 feet. (196)

The second 1927 case occurred in a remote region of the Australian state of New South Wales.

It, too, involved a UFO of the cylindrical kind.

The incident began when two brothers walking home one night noticed an aerial light approaching them:

"It got nearer, until it was over our heads. There it was-a large, round, dull light which seemed to be beneath a round, cylinder-shaped object with a dome on top. As it passed overhead, we were able to get a good view of it.

It suddenly started to hiss, and it lit up with a dazzling light which lit up the whole area just like day. Then it turned slightly and moved towards our back paddock, where it came to rest on a hil just inside our neighbor's property.

My brother said it must have been a fal ing star, but we were puzzled as to how slow it had traveled, and also that it had traveled down between two hil s to pass over our heads, and then alter course. But we decided to wait until morning to go out and see what it real y was".

The morning after the incident, the brothers discovered a scorched area of grass about 30 feet in diameter at the spot where the UFO had landed. Later, their neighbors reported they'd also witnessed the strange object land that night, and said it glowed before its light went out and it disappeared into the darkness. (197)

There were a number of other cases of landed UFOs during the 1920s, some complete with occupants.

In 1920, a man in the Canadian province of Quebec was returning home one night when his horse began acting strangely. Then he spotted a circular UFO resting on the ground nearby. He said it was about 50 feet in diameter and 16 feet high, with a yel ow light.

The witness reported observing four or five smal , humanoid figures moving quickly around the outside of the object, and said he heard "child-like" sounds coming from them.

He then saw the UFO take off with a "machine-like" noise and what sounded like a rush of air.

(198)

That same year, a man fishing in a pond near Mount Pleasant, Iowa one spring day came home with a fisherman's tale of the UFO kind.

According to the witness, he forgot al about fish when a smal , discshaped object suddenly ascended from a nearby grove of trees and landed some 15 feet from him. He said it was blue, "of a size like a five-gal on cream can" and made no noise whatsoever.

More curious than alarmed, the man started to walk toward the strange craft. But before he could reach it, he said the UFO "slowly lifted over the trees and disappeared-stil no noise." (199) The fisherman's tale was easily topped by the story told by a Nebraska hunter a couple of years later (in 1922).

The man claimed he was hunting near the town of Hubbel around dawn one day when he heard a crackling sound fol owed by a high-pitched noise. Looking up, he spotted a brightly lit, circular object descend and land just out of view behind a nearby hil .

The most remarkable part of the man's story was yet to come, however. He said a "magnificent flying creature" standing at least eight feet tal also landed in the vicinity of where the circular object had just landed, and proceeded to walk past his hiding place behind a tree. The hunter claimed he fol owed the creature's trail in the snow for several miles, but was unable to catch sight of it again. (200) Occupants about half as large made up the crew of the UFO that an Indiana farm boy said he encountered the fol owing year (1923). The incident al egedly occurred near the town of Richmond, and was described by the witness years later:

"I opened the gate to let the horses into the pasture. As I was closing the gate, I looked back down the field, and there was an object with lights al around it.

I kept walking closer to the object until I got about 50 feet away. I stood there and watched the five men who were aboard. I got close enough that I could hear them talk. One guy sat in a chair, and the others cal ed him the commander. Four others made trips back and forth in the ship.

The machine was metal ic, and stood on three legs. The top was a dome with holes in it. The best way I could describe the top was it looked like melted glass".

The witness said the occupants were about four feet tal and had blond hair. After an observation lasting about five minutes, he recounted:

"It came to a hovering position. The tripod legs telescoped up into the bel y of the thing, and it went straight up about 200 feet, and whizzed off to the west like a bullet.

You can cal me anything you want, but I know in my heart and in my mind what I saw that evening. It was some kind of spaceship". (201)

A surreal 1924 incident in south Florida echoes more recent reports of smal humanoid occupants being seen in the company of a more normal-looking individual.

The incident began when an egg-shaped UFO reportedly landed on the playground of a Catholic grade school in Dade City. According to a woman who as a young girl was present at the time, a door opened in the craft and a number of strange, robot-like entities emerged. The witness said they were shorter than her and "resembled animated flowers with faces where the bud would be." She told how they proceeded toward the school carrying something she took to be a weapon of some kind:

"I wanted to help them, but someone said, "Stop." I replied that they were so smal , I was going to assist. The creatures let me try, but I couldn't even budge the machine. I was told they were going to stop the work that was being done in the science building. They said if the work continued, they would destroy the place. Later, I heard the place was in a shambles".

According to the witness, "there was a man with the little people," and someone communicated with her telepathical y:

"They asked if I wanted to go. I said no. They promised to come back for me in 35 years. But that time was up a long time ago, and nothing happened that I know of".

The woman said the occupants then reentered the UFO and it took off vertical y, hovering for about a minute before it disappeared. (202)

The United States didn't have a monopoly on encounters with UFO occupants during this period.

In 1920, a teenage boy claimed he made friends with the occupant of a UFO that landed along the Mattawa River in the Canadian province of Ontario. The witness heard someone cal ing for help, and discovered a boy trapped between some rocks.

The individual in distress had blond hair and blue eyes, and wore a silver, leather-like suit with

"dials and instruments" on the chest. The victim told his rescuer that he'd stopped to do some fishing, and that his "plane" was nearby.

When the witness assisted the boy back to the aircraft, he was amazed to see it was a silver, saucer-shaped object about 20 feet in diameter resting on three legs. The good Samaritan gave the ufonaut a push up into the craft, and it promptly took off. (203) Five years later (in 1925), another "open air" type UFO (similar to the one seen by an English woman during World War I) was reported in Spain. It was a smal er version of the same sort of circular platform with a railing around the outer edge.

This time there was a single individual standing on the platform. The witness said the figure was about four feet tal , wore a green uniform and appeared to be holding a "blow pipe" in one outstretched hand. (204)

The fol owing year (1926), the son of a British policeman didn't see a UFO, but told of encountering a trio of humanoids that sound like they could've come from one.

He came upon the three entities peering into the window of his house in Lancashire. He said they had pale heads shaped like lightbulbs, with smal noses, slit-like eyes and no visible mouths. They wore round, transparent helmets, dark-

colored boots and suits that looked like they were made of silver-gray rubber tubes.

When they spotted the boy, one of them made a peculiar noise, and al three creatures started moving toward him. The witness turned and ran away as fast as he could. (205) Two years later (in 1928), a young girl in England reported encountering an unusual-looking occupant and its unusual-looking craft near Leicester.

She described the entity as black and five feet tal , with a large head and extremely long arms. It

was walking near an abject that looked like a huge egg standing on end. The "egg" was supported by three legs which extended to the ground.

When the witness returned with her father, both the entity and the object were gone. (206) The fol owing year (1929), it was the turn of a man in the Canadian province of Quebec to encounter a landed UFO and its occupants.

The witness was driving at night near the town of Fermeneuve when he came upon a strange dark cloud with a yel ow light inside resting on a hil side, and stopped for a closer look. When he'd approached to within about 150 feet of the thing, he was able to determine that the light was coming from a circular object approximately 50 feet in diameter.

In addition, he could now make out four or five smal , yel ow-colored humanoid figures moving around the outside of the object. Before he could notice anything else, the UFO took off "purring like a milk separator." (207)

Final y, there were a couple of UFO cases reported during the 1920s where the objects in question appeared to make less-than-control ed landings.

Like the incident involving a strange aerial craft and its occupants that paid a brief visit to Braxton County, West Virginia in 1924 and left behind a number of unanswered questions.

The incident began when witnesses near the town of Gem observed an object one of them said was "as big as a battleship" flying erratical y and apparently crash landing in thick woods.

When some of them reached the site, they were surprised to find the strange craft apparently intact, as one witness recal ed years later:

"It didn't look like much of a flying machine. In fact, it was a wonder it could fly at al . It was like the fuselage of a modem plane, with windows and al . But it didn't have any wings, tail or propel ers.

It was mighty big. I'd say it was at least 75 feet long. It fil ed the whole clearing".

The would-be rescuers were equal y surprised by the col ection of individuals they found at the scene: "There were five or six men in the clearing. Some of them were dressed in black business suits, neckties and al .

Others were dressed in coveral s of a funny color-some kind of shiny material. They were talking among themselves in a rapid-fire foreign language when we found them. They got real excited when they saw us. The men in coveral s ran into the wreck, like they were trying to hide.

The strangers were al smal -just a little over five feet tal -and they looked like Orientals. You know, with high cheekbones, slant eyes and dark skin.

One of them spoke English with a peculiar accent. He told us nobody was hurt, that everything was al right. He told us he would cal on the sheriff later and make a complete report. But he never did".

The witnesses departed at that point. But for one of them, a further surprise awaited:

"While I was looking around, I spotted a little metal thingamajig on the ground. I picked it up and decided to keep it. I put it in my pocket.

I went back home. I went right to bed. About three a.m., somebody started pounding on my door. I got up and looked, and there was an Army officer standing there.

He was dressed in one of those broad-brimmed hats they used to wear, with those leg wrappings and al . It was a U.S. Army uniform al right. I was in the Big War. But we didn't see many soldiers in West Virginia in those days. Anyway, except for his clothes, he looked just like those foreigners from the airplane — slant eyes, dark skin, maybe a little tal er.

He said, "You picked up something yesterday. We need it bach."

I was half asleep, and at first I couldn't think what he meant. Then I remembered that metal thingamajig. It was stil in my coat pocket, so I went and got it.

I asked him, "Is this what you want?"

He didn't answer. Just took it and walked off without a word. He didn't seem to have a horse or a car. I shuffled back to bed. But the next day, I started wondering about it. How had he managed to track me down?

A couple of days later, I went back to that clearing. It was empty. The grass and bushes were al crushed down where the airplane had been, but there was no other sign of anything or anybody. The farmer said he had seen some lights in the sky the next night, and thought the thing had taken off then".

(208)

The curious episode with the supposed Army officer wil no doubt remind some readers of the post-1947 phenomenon known as Men in Black, where mysterious strangers turn up on the doorsteps of UFO witnesses to retrieve evidence and stifle testimony.

Then there's the noisy mystery object that apparently crashed to earth in a remote area of Montana ranch country near Poison the fol owing year (1925).

The incident was observed by a local woman and her young son. According to the son's recol ection years later, they heard a "pulsating, roaring noise" and looked up to see "a flaming circular object of approximately 200 feet or more in diameter descending at approximately 700 to 1,000 miles per hour and about five miles distant."

He said the object was revolving "at a rate of about two turns per second" and "seemed to hesitate and move approximately one diameter to the north before it continued its descent." The witness added that he observed what looked like pieces of debris coming from the object. However, he said there was no fiery trail fol owing the object, as would be expected if it were a meteor.

Whatever it was, it gave off a bril iant white flash when it apparently impacted behind a nearby mountain. The witnesses reportedly heard no noise and felt no

shock wave. (209) Chapter 6

UFO: 1930-1939

The decade of the 1930s proved to be the lull before the storm both in terms of the approaching dark clouds of the Second World War and the explosion of UFO activity which accompanied and fol owed that

tragic conflict.

Nevertheless, there were some dramatic encounters with UFOs and their occupants in the United States and several other nations in the pre-war years.

In this country, two witnesses reportedly observed a strange-looking aerial device over the Connecticut shore of Long Island Sound in the early part of the decade (either 1932 or 1933):

"They noticed a plane flying much (faster) than any they had seen before. Then it began a sharp turn into the rays of the setting sun, passing over them at great speed.

The object was cigar-shaped, emitting a pink glow at its front and a light swirl of gray smoke along its sides. It was huge compared to any other plane. It had no rudder, (wings) or elevator.

It disappeared into the northwest, probably on a line between Rye and Port Chester". (210) A Pennsylvania motorist got a much closer look at what was evidently a landed UFO he encountered near Al entown early one morning in 1933.

The man stopped to fix a flat tire and noticed an eerie purple light coming from a field next to the road. Curious, he walked toward the spot to investigate the source of the strange glow.

What he found was a bel -shaped object about six feet tal and 10 feet in diameter resting on the ground. The light which had initial y attracted his attention was coming from a circular door on the side of the craft.Seeing no one around, the man decided to stick his head inside the door. The interior was a domed, windowless chamber full of dials and other instrumentation. The air inside was cold and smel ed like ammonia.

Next, he turned his attention to the outside of the object. It felt smooth, metal ic and cold.

After examining the mysterious craft for a total of about 10 minutes, the witness returned to his car, finished changing his tire and drove off. (211)

Five years later (in 1938), a young man observed a domed, saucer-shaped object flying over La

Grange, Georgia at mid-day. He recal ed it was as large as one of today's commercial airliners and said he could discern what looked like portholes. The witness estimated the object was flying at an altitude between 4,000 and 5,000 feet and a speed of nearly 1,000 miles per hour. (212) A man in Idaho was also impressed by the speed of the UFO he saw during another daylight sighting that same year.

The witness was among a group of surveyors working at an electrical power station near Boise, when one of his col eagues suddenly rushed up to him and pointed excitedly to a strange object in the sky.

Quickly pressing his transit instrument into service as a telescope, the witness observed a discshaped craft that was blurred around its edges as though it was rotating at high speed. He was puzzled by the fact that there seemed to be no visible engines, cockpit or exhaust trail. There was also no sound coming from the object.

The UFO was moving across the sky so fast that the witness had trouble keeping his telescope focused on it. He estimated the object was flying at a height of 4,000 feet when it disappeared from view.

(213)

A third UFO spotted in this country in 1938 made an impression on a witness not only by its speed, but also by its unconventional way of flying.

The man reported observing a huge, gray dirigible-shaped object flying near Arbuckle, Texas. It had no visible undercarriage, but did possess a row of windows around its body which reflected sunlight.

Suddenly, the object shot off sideways and disappeared from sight. (214) Although the witness in this case couldn't think of anything the object could be other than an unusual dirigible, the object's speed, the absence of a gondola or engine nacel es and its "sideways" flight pattern suggest other possibilities to the modern reader.

Elsewhere in the world during the decade, pioneer aviator Sir Francis Chichester provided the fol owing account of the encounter he had with a similar-looking UFO while flying his biplane over the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand in 1931:

"Suddenly, ahead and to the left, there were bright flashes in several places, like the dazzle of a heliograph. I saw a dull, gray-white airship coming toward me.

It seemed impossible, hut I could have sworn that it was an airship, nosing toward me like an oblong pearl. I looked around, sometimes catching a flash or a glint. Turning again to look at the airship, I found that it had disappeared.

Then, out of some clouds to my front, I saw another or the same airship advancing. I watched it intently, determined not to look away for a fraction of a second.

It drew steadily closer until perhaps a mile away, when suddenly it vanished. Then it reappeared close to where it had vanished. It drew closer.

I could see the dull gleam of light on its nose and hack. It came on, hut instead of increasing in size, it suddenly became its own ghost. One second I could see through it, the next it had vanished.

Al this was many years before anyone spoke of flying saucers. Whatever it was I saw, it seems to have been very much like what people have since claimed to be flying saucers". (215) Two Danish air force pilots were equal y unnerved by the strange craft which briefly shared the sky with them one day over Greenland the fol owing year (1932):

"We had many adventures flying under primitive conditions in the frozen north. But none compared with this.

I looked back and saw something that didn't make sense. It was nothing like flying machines of that period.

It was hexagonal, flat, and seemingly made of aluminum or some other metal, with no breaks in the surface and no rivets.

At the time, I had a spooky feeling. I can't explain it. It was as if I felt the presence of whoever was inside that craft-and the feeling was hostile.

In the years since, I've realized that the craft was saucer-shaped, and I believe it real y was a flying saucer". (216)

The fol owing year (1933), a group of four British Royal Air Force fighters attracted some unusual company of their own during a training flight over the English countryside.

They were flying in Sussex when al at once, a huge, circular lighted object dropped from above into the center of their formation. Two of the planes were forced to make emergency landings when their engines suddenly quit. The pilot who'd been closest to the object sustained burns to his face and hands.

(217)

1936 was a particularly busy year for UFO incidents in Europe.

In September, the daughter of a farmer in Staffordshire, England received a bad scare from her close encounter with a brown, cigar-shaped craft with portholes she said descended to within a few feet of her as she was about to draw some water from a wel .

The witness reported she felt paralyzed at one point. She later discovered that she'd drawn a pail of water from the wel , although she didn't remember doing it. (218) Also in 1936, at least two different types of UFOs were spotted flying over Italy on the same day, as described in a confidential report to the country's dictator, Benito Mussolini:

"(The first) was a metal ic disc, polished and reflecting light, (33-39 feet). Two fighters from a near base took off, hut were not able to reach it. It didn't emit sound, (The second) was a sort of metal ic tube, gray or slate. (It was) a kind of aerial torpedo, with very clear windows and alternating white and red lights.

(The third type) were two "hats" like those used by priests: wide, round, with a dome in the center. (They were) metal ic and fol owing the torpedo without

changing their relative positions".

It's possible the first object described as disc-shaped was the same hat-shaped object seen about an hour later, but it was observed from an angle where the dome was not visible.

A drawing rendered by an eyewitness in the second incident showed the torpedo-shaped object had four rectangular windows on its side and was approximately three times as large as the two hat-shaped craft accompanying it. (219)

The third European sighting of 1936 occurred in the skies near the island nation of Malta, located in the Mediterranean Sea just south of Italy.

Witnesses there observed a "zeppelin-shaped" object flying at high speed just off shore. One man who studied the object with the aid of a telescope said he could see people wearing strange helmets inside a gondola on the craft.

Whatever the object was, it apparently wasn't a dirigible, because Germany's zeppelins and al other nations' airships were al accounted for at the time. (220) Two years later (in 1938), a man in Norway had several of his senses stimulated by a close encounter with a disc-shaped UFO.

The witness was enjoying the summer air outside his home one night when he heard what sounded like an electrical generator. Then the area around him suddenly lit up, and the increasing noise produced a pain in his head.

At the same time, he was amazed to see a strange blue object with a reddish halo rise from the ground about 65 feet away. The object emitted a blue-white exhaust that resembled the smel of burned rubber and stung his eyes and throat.

The UFO rose a short distance into the air and then settled to earth again with a fal ing leaf motion. He estimated the object was 65-82 feet in diameter and 7-10 feet high. The man got the impression he was being observed from inside the craft.

Then the object took off once more, circled the area briefly and flew off toward the north without making a sound. (221)

Most of the reports of encounters with UFO occupants during the 1930s also occurred outside the United States.

In 1933, residents of a sparsely-populated region of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan near Tobin Lake observed a series of strange nocturnal lights for about a week. Most people attributed them to swamp gas escaping from local marshes-until three residents decided to get a closer look one night.

What the trio saw was a weird, glowing object resting on the ground. It was oval-shaped with a dome on the top, and stood on tripod-like legs. A ladder or stairway extended to the ground from an opening in the side of the craft.

The witnesses observed about a dozen humanoid figures moving around the base of the UFO.

They appeared to be shorter than an average man, and wore silver suits and helmets.

At that point, the witnesses decided they'd seen enough for one night and left. When they later returned to the scene in daytime, they discovered six deep, square impressions in the soil surrounding a burned circular area approximately 12 feet in diameter. (222) Around the same time, a woman had a potential y more sinister daylight encounter in the same general area, as recounted by her daughter years later:

"She was by herself in afield beside a pond that was located on the farm where she lived. Across the pond, she observed a number of "little green men" who were about four feet high and wearing silvery suits. I asked her if she could remember what happened next. She says that she can't realy remember, but then made the comment: "I don't know. Maybe I was abducted." (223) There was no doubt in the mind of a woman in Australia that she experienced a UFO abduction that same year.

The witness said the rest of her fel ow aborigines fled a remote water hole in the western part of the country when a "large, shining egg" suddenly descended from the sky, but that she remained behind to observe several man-like beings with gray skin emerge from the "egg."

Before she could retreat, she said she was temporarily paralyzed by an instrument directed at her by one of the ufonauts and taken aboard the craft. Once inside, the woman claimed she was strapped to a table and examined by the occupants. (224)

A couple of years later (in 1935), a farmer near Sevil e, Spain reported encountering a UFO and its occupants from a safer distance.

The witness observed a large, round, brightly-lit object descend and hover just above the ground.

He said several smal beings then appeared and walked around the craft. (225) Three years after this incident (in 1938), two Spanish soldiers experienced a more interactive encounter with the UFO they observed in Guadalajara.

The pair watched in stunned amazement as a lens-shaped object some 35 feet in diameter and 15

feet thick hovered just above ground level, and two figures descended a platform which suddenly extended from the underside of the craft.

At that moment, they were struck by. a blue beam emanating from the UFO and felt a distinct chil over their bodies. Then, the occupants and the platform were drawn up into the object, which began to glow intensely before it took off. (226)

That same year, some other UFO occupants left behind a souvenir of their visit to northern Greece. Here's how the son of the witness in the incident retold his father's encounter:

"Suddenly, he saw two people in a clearing. He approached them carefully. There was enough light, as the sun was to rise in a couple of minutes, so my father could see them clearly.

These two "men" were tal -tal er than an ordinary man, with big heads and short hair. Their eyes were red and were staring at him in a very peculiar way. Both had dark skin-not brown like a negro's skin, but red, bronze, suntanned. Their faces seemed sunburned and bloated. They were wearing uniforms something like English military outfits.

The two "people" were standing in front of a large "thing." The object was egg-shaped and had a height of about (9 feet). Its width was enough for two standing occupants. The craft was standing upon three or four legs.

Apparently, it was half metal ic and half glass. Its upper half was transparent. There was an opening on its metal ic portion like a manhole, and a little ladder

with three or four steps.

(My father) started shouting, cal ing the two "people." They stepped back, climbed the ladder and entered the craft. They were clearly visible within the.crystal half of the craft.

They pulled the ladder inside, and suddenly there was a noise. Then, on top of the craft, something like a bal oon appeared or inflated, and the craft took off vertical y. During its ascent, no flames or smoke were visible, and no noise was heard. (He) thought that one of the craft's occupants waved at him.

(My father) examined the area of the landing. He found a bottle of about (a pint). He was afraid to touch it, so he pushed it with his ax. The bottle fel and its cork blew off. A thick liquid poured out.

The liquid combusted spontaneously, and set fire to the nearby grass and bushes. Some drops of the unknown liquid fel on the ax's (handle) and immediately set it on fire". (227) One other curious international incident involving possible UFO occupants is reported to have occurred in 1938.

A Canadian provincial policeman was pursuing a suspect in a remote area of northern British Columbia when he al egedly made a startling discovery in a cave. He claimed he found the bodies of five smal humanoid creatures dressed in tight-fitting, spacesuit-like garments. They had disproportionately large heads and long fingers.

The officer—fearing the effect such a story might have on his reputation and perhaps his job-never filed a report of the incident with his superiors, but revealed it to UFO investigators before he died at the age of 94 in 1997. (228)

One of the few known reports of an encounter with UFO occupants in the U.S. during the 1930s also occurred during the same eventful year of 1938. It began when a man walking home one night in Somervil e, Massachusetts noticed an aerial light fol owing him:

"I thought it was a Navy blimp at first glance, and only gave it a casual look and continued walking. I then glanced up again, and it was up to me. At this point, I looked for the usual gondola or propel ers beneath the blimp. To my amazement, there were none".

The witness also observed that the object wasn't as fat as a blimp or dirigible. Then an ominous new element entered the picture. He could see four lighted windows on the side facing him-and the silhouette of a grotesque entity staring down at him from one of them.

He couldn't make out any facial features, but saw that the thing was very thin, with a long head, stooped shoulders and spindly arms:

I looked back, and could see other people in other portholes, apparently changing places and looking down. At this point, it disappeared behind some low scudding clouds, and I couldn't see it any more. (229)

There are several reports of UFO crashes during the 1930s, al of them outside the United States. Unfortunately, only a few sketchy details are available on these incidents.

A series of documents purportedly from the early 1930s recently came to light in Italy containing instructions from Benito Mussolini concerning the handling of information related to UFOs. In one of these documents, a reference is made to the recovery of a crashed UFO near Milan in 1933. (230) Another crashed UFO was reportedly recovered in the Black Forest region of Germany in 1936.

(231)

A third retrieval of a crashed UFO in Europe al egedly occurred in Poland near its border with Germany in 1938 (232)

Final y, one other intriguing development involving an al eged UFO crash first came to light during the 1930s.

In 1938, a team of Chinese archeologists made a surprising discovery in a series of remote caves near the Tibetan border-neatly aligned graves containing a number of smal (four-to-five feet tal) humanoid skeletons with disproportionately large heads.

On the wal s of one cave, the archeologists found drawings depicting humanoid figures wearing round helmets, along with what appeared to be a celestial map showing the Earth, sun, moon and various stars connected by a series of dotted lines.

Something even more remarkable was discovered on the cave floor: over 700 round stone discs engraved with lines of characters which spi-raled outward from the center of each disc much like the

grooves in a phonograph record.

As it turned out, the comparison to a phonograph record was an apt one. When several of the discs were sent to Moscow, scientists there discovered the discs vibrated or hummed with a high frequency resonance, and that "embedded al oys of silicon, cobalt and aluminum which are found as part of the spiral grooves could very possibly form an electronic recording capability similar to that used in present-day magnetic recording machines." The Russian scientists also concluded that the discs had been exposed to very high voltages "as if they formed some part of an electrical circuit."

A Chinese scientist claimed he deciphered the script contained in the spirals, and said it told an amazing story of ancient extraterrestrialas-tronauts who were stranded on this planet when their spaceship crash landed here thousands of years ago.

Interestingly, the story on the discs dovetails with ancient legends of some of the region's indigenous population which told of a group of smal people with large heads and spindly bodies who came from the clouds long ago and were hunted down and kil ed. (233) Chapter 7

UFOs During The Second World War

The war years (1939-1945) witnessed a major increase in UFO sightings worldwide. Whether the objects seen during this period were the products of the combatants themselves or of outside observers is stil a matter of some debate more than half a century later.

Throughout the war, numerous aerial objects unlike those known to exist in any nation's air force at the time appeared in the world's skies. These UFOs were reported in both combat and non-combat areas. In the United States, a man was walking down a street in Hinsdale, Illinois one day in 1940 when he spotted a formation of five discshaped aircraft flying overhead. He estimated their speed at somewhere between 100 and 200 miles per hour. The witness watched the UFOs fly into a cloud, and said they never came out the other side. (234)

A couple of years later (in 1942), three New Jersey motorists stopped to observe a UFO

hovering in the sky between the towns of Lafayette and Newton. In the words of one of the witnesses:

"(It) had two rows of windows (that) gave off blue, green, white and red fluorescent lights. We watched this object for approximately 10 minutes. Then it silently and very slowly took off. From where I stood, I had the impression of hearing laughter or happy voices.

As we drove along, I again saw this large, cigar-shaped object. Suddenly, it took off very fast and disappeared". (235)

However, the biggest UFO excitement in the United States that year occurred one night in the skies over Los Angeles, when anti-aircraft batteries and searchlights focused on aerial intruders thought at the time to be Japanese.

Thousands of people watched apprehensively as a large object hovered above the city, seemingly impervious to the projectiles striking it.

A civilian air raid warden described what she saw that memorable evening:

"It was huge. It was just enormous. And it was practical y right over my house. I had never seen anything like it in my life. It was just hovering there in the sky and hardly moving at al .

It was a lovely pale orange, and about the most beautiful thing you've ever seen. I could see it perfectly, because it was very close. It was big.

They sent fighter planes up, and I watched them in groups approach it and then turn away. There was shooting at it, but it didn't seem to matter. It was like the Fourth of July, but much louder. They were firing like crazy, but they couldn't touch it".

Official explanations of the incident ranged from hal ucinations produced by wartime jitters to

"unidentified airplanes operated by enemy agents for purposes of spreading alarm, disclosing locations of antiaircraft positions and slowing production

through blackout."

Which prompted one local newspaper to observe:

"There is a mysterious reticence about the whole affair, and it appears some form of censorship is trying to halt discussion of the matter". (236)

Another California aircraft spotter got an even closer look at a UFO in the Santa Barbara area the fol owing year (1943).

The incident began when she observed a "huge, dark aerial object approaching." The witness described what happened next:

"From the front of the object, a beam of light shot down at an angle toward the earth. At intervals, it swung from side to side, as if scanning the hil s and homes below. I sat on my balcony, too frozen with terror to move.

I realized that the object was flying very low, for it fil ed my view and seemed to just barely miss hitting our two-story house as it passed overhead. There was no hum of a motor, no windows I was able to see. I was unable to discern its shape, for it was upon me before I realized it.

I was conscious only of the hugeness of the thing, its beam of light scanning the earth like an evil eye, and the intense fright which it created in me". (237) That same year, a UFO paid another low-level visit to a home in Escondido, California.

A woman stepped outside her home one night for some air and was shocked to see a strange object hovering barely 15 feet above her roof. It was disc-shaped, about 12 feet in diameter and had a dome on top. The dome featured a row of windows, and through two of them the witness could see man-like silhouettes.

Deciding reinforcements were in order, the woman quickly summoned her husband and son. Al three watched the object continue hovering while it emitted a humming noise. Then its lights suddenly went out and it disappeared from view. (238)

In yet another 1943 incident in the Golden State, a military flight instructor and his student observed a fast flying UFO from the air near Long Beach. The man later provided an admirably detailed description of the encounter:

"This object appeared from the northeast on a level flight path and turned while decelerating from a great speed to fly paral el to us for approximately 30 seconds before it disappeared from view at (a) speed which I estimate to be between 2,000 and 5,000 miles per hour.

The object was an international orange in color, had an el iptical or rounded forward structure (and) was proportioned (like) a conventional aircraft's fuselage. No propel ers or jet orifice were visible, nor was any flame, smoke or vapor trailed.

There had been a rumor at this time that Lockheed Aircraft Company were building a jet aircraft, and we thought we had witnessed the flight of it. I learned much later that the first flight of the Lockheed P-80 did not take place until over a year from this time,

(Later), I witnessed an early flight of the P-80. Immediately upon seeing the relative slowness of the P-80 and its easily identifiable outlines, I realized we had witnessed some inexplicable object". (239) Also in 1943, a couple observed another speedy UFO while driving in Nebraska, as recounted years later by their grandson:

"They both saw a large, glowing gold saucer that fol owed them for several miles in broad daylight before speeding away at a rate of speed never heard of or seen by either of them before.

My grandfather, who was familiar with al flying machines known at that time, told (grandmother) to never mention this to anyone, even family, as they would undoubtedly be considered crazy". (240) If anything, the pace of stateside UFO visitations seemed to pick up as the war progressed.

In 1944, two women motorists near St. Paul, Minnesota were alarmed to see what they thought was an airplane about to crash. Their relief must've been somewhat mixed when the craft suddenly stopped in midair and hovered 20 feet over their car.

The witnesses described the strange visitor as a shiny, brown bullet-shaped object. They said it emitted a cracking noise before turning away and flying off at bullet-like speed. (241) That same year, a man in Apache, Oklahoma turned in one of the most unusual UFO

descriptions ever.

He said he was standing on his porch around mid-day, when he heard a "rushing wind sound,"

and looked into the sky:

"(There was a) silver train like a streamlined passenger train with about nine coaches with landing gear that looked like inflated pil ow-like wheels. It traveled from east to west with a swish sound".

The witness reportedly had the strange contraption under observation for some 10 minutes before it flew out of sight at a high rate of speed. At one point, he said it passed only 100 yards from his house, at about the height of his 60-foot-tal windmil . (242)

Around the same time, hundreds of witnesses observed a group of nine saucer-shaped UFOs in mid-afternoon on two consecutive days near Boston, Massachusetts.

On both occasions, the objects flew over Wol aston Beach in an echelon formation, sometimes tilting from side to side. Witnesses said they had highly reflective surfaces, and appeared golden colored when they tilted a certain way. (243)

In another 1944 incident, a metal ic-looking, tube-like object was observed hovering near a defense plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. When a crowd of curious spectators began to gather, the UFO flew off.

The incident was promptly reported to the FBI, because the plant was engaged in the manufacture of material for use in America's atomic bombs. (244)

Another case of a UFO showing interest in this nation's nuclear development occurred the fol owing year at a then-secret facility in Hanford, Washington. Like the plant in Oak Ridge, the reactor there produced ingredients for atomic bombs.

The Hanford incident began when fighter planes from a nearby air station were scrambled to intercept a large UFO hovering directly over the plant. When they arrived at the scene, the pilots found the object was too high for their planes to

reach. But they managed to get a good look at the strange intruder before their fuel ran low and they had to return to base.

According to one pilot, it was "nothing I've ever seen before." Another noticed some kind of vapor coming from portholes or vents in the object, and provided these additional details: "(It was) the size of three aircraft carriers side by side, oval-shaped, very streamlined like a stretched-out egg and pinkish in color". (245)

Some other World War II airmen were also left grasping for words to describe the UFO they observed in the sky above their base in Salina, Kansas. They were puzzled because the object looked something like a dirigible, but wasn't one:

"As we look up, we see this huge, cigar-shaped object. There's no controls in the back end (and) no "bathtub" underneath. I can't see any lights. It didn't fit any category that I could make. And I was a trained observer".

The witness estimated the UFO was three times the size of a B-29 bomber, the largest aircraft in the world at that time. (246)

In 1945, a man was hunting near Belfast, Maine when he reportedly observed a UFO land. He watched the elongated object fly slowly toward earth at a gradual angle and come to rest in a clearing in some woods.

After sitting on the ground briefly, the strange craft emitted a humming sound, began revolving and ascended straight up into the sky. Before it disappeared from view, the witness said it discharged a shower of fine, silvery, thread-like material. (In later years, similar material dropped from UFOs would be given a somewhat whimsical name: angel hair.) (247)

Another staple feature of more recent UFO incidents-electromagnetic interference-manifested itself in the encounter experienced by two women in California around the same time. (The same effect may also have been at work in several of the airplane-UFO encounters previously discussed.) The pair was driving near the town of Auberry when they came upon a hovering, cigar-shaped object and the engine of their car suddenly stal ed. After the UFO departed, the engine started by itself.

The witnesses said the object displayed a variety of colors and glided slowly paral el to the ground for a short distance before "shootmg away" in a matter of seconds. (248)

UFOs were reported in non-combat areas outside the United States during World War II as wel , including a curious incident that occurred in Norway in either 1941 or 1942.

Two women observed a silver, disc-shaped craft approximately 33 feet in diameter rise from the ground about 300 yards away. The UFO was revolving and trailing three haycocks in its wake. After traveling a short distance horizontal y, the object dropped the haycocks and disappeared. The man who owned the farm where the UFO was first seen later confirmed that three of his haycocks were missing.

(249) An incident in the same country in 1943 involved another apparent case of electromagnetic interference by a UFO.

The incident began when a group of friends noticed a strange light nearby and seL out in several cars to investigate. As they got close to the light, each car's engine stal ed at the exact same moment.

Proceeding on foot, the party came upon the source of the light-an orange, bel - shaped object which was emitting a whistling sound that reminded them of compressed air being released.

Before they could notice any other details, the UFO suddenly rose into the air and shot off at tremendous speed, changing to a blue color in the process.

Examining the spot where the mystery craft had been resting, they discovered a crater in the snow three feet deep and 4-1/2 in diameter encircled by a larger area of melted snow measuring more than 50

feet in diameter. (250)

A landed UFO encountered by a motorist in Argentina that same year, while exhibiting sounds and flight characteristics similar to the one in Norway, appeared to have left a different kind of cal ing card behind. The man came upon a large, saucer-shaped object on the ground near the road and stopped to observe. He said it glowed with a blue-green light and made a whistling sound before it rose straight up and then flew off at a fantastic speed. Later, a strange block of metal was reportedly found at the site.

(251) The folowing year (1944), a young man observed what he at first thought was a dirigible over his vil age in Czechoslovakia:

"I saw above me in the blue sky a cigar-shaped object glittering brightly. Although it had a stabilizer, there was no propel er, rudder or wings. Its length seemed to be (300-500 feet, and its) diameter about (164 feet).

As the sun set, the object caught its light, the sunny side being silver while the one in the shadow appeared to fuse its blue with that of the sky.

The object was lit up more strongly from underneath, which was where I had supposed the Zeppelin's cabin to be. I did, of course, ask myself why the Germans should have brought such vulnerable, old-fashioned and obsolescent machines into the battle.

The thing seemed to come slowly and soundlessly down. Its decent lasted about seven minutes, after which the object rose up again and vanished into the sky.

I was familiar with the use of bal oons as a means of defense, since I had often seen them. But they were quite a bit smal er than the thing I now saw". (252) That same year, two people first heard and then saw a neatly-aligned formation of UFOs flying over the Canadian province of Ontario.

The witnesses said their attention was initial y drawn by a peculiar hissing noise. When they glanced skyward, they observed nine large, disc-shaped objects flying by at an altitude of about 2,000

feet. The UFOs were arrayed in three rows of three craft each, with the second and third rows positioned directly behind the first.

Many more UFOs were reported in combat areas during the war.

In the Pacific theater of operations, a pilot of the Royal Australian Air Force told of encountering a highly unusual aircraft over the Bass Strait (located between Australia and Tasmania) one afternoon in 1942: "Of a sudden, there came out of a cloud bank a singular airfoil of a glistening bronze color.

I'd say it was around 150 feet long and about 50 feet in diameter. It had a sort of beak at its prow, and the surface seemed rippled or fluted. On its upper surface was a dome or cupola, from which I seemed to see reflected flashes as the sun

struck something, which might or might not have been a helmet worn by something inside.

Every now and again, there came from its keel greenish-blue flashes. It turned at a smal angle towards us, and I was amazed to see, framed in a white circle on the front of the dome, an image of a large, grinning Cheshire cat.

The damn thing flew paral el to us for some minutes. Then it abruptly turned away. As it did so, it showed four things like fins on its bel y side.

It went off at a hel of apace, turned and dived straight down into the Pacific. And under it went, throwing up a regular whirlpool of waves, just as if it had been a submarine". (253) A few days later, another singular aerial object took a prolonged interest in a warship of the Dutch navy in the Timor Sea near New Guinea, as recounted by one of the vessel's crew:

"While on watch for enemy aircraft just after noon, I was scanning the skies with binoculars.

Suddenly, I saw a large, il uminated disc approaching at terrific speed 4,000 or 5,000 feet above us. This object proceeded to circle high above our ship, the cruiser Tromp.

After reporting it to the officers on the bridge, they were unable to identify it as any known aircraft. After keeping track of this object for three to four hours as it flew in big circles and at the same height, the craft suddenly veered off in a tremendous burst of speed-about 3,000 to 3,500 miles an hour-and disappeared from sight". (254)

Later in 1942, a U.S. Marine sergeant observed a veritable fleet of UFOs flying over the island of Tulagi in the Solomons chain:

"It was a bright tropical morning. Suddenly, the air raid warning was sounded. I heard the formation before I saw it. I was puzzled by the sound.

It was a mighty roar that seemed to echo in the heavens. It didn't sound at al like the high-pitched "sewing machine" drone of the Jap formations.

A few seconds later, I saw the formation of silvery objects directly overhead. The formation was huge. I would say over 150 objects were in it. Instead of the usual

"V" of 25 planes, this formation was in straight lines of 10 or 12 objects, one behind the other.

The speed was a little faster than Jap planes, and they were soon out of sight. A few other things puzzled me. I couldn't seem to make out wings or tails. They seemed to wobble slightly, and every time they wobbled, they would shimmer brightly from the sun. Their color was like highly-polished silver".

(255) A Japanese civilian was equaly puzzled by the "flying hotcakes" that visited the skies of Tokyo on the heels of bombing raids by American B-29s on two nights in 1944:

"They were blue-maybe gray-and flew over my shelter. They were fol owed several times by six-feet-wide and 30-feet-long colored air waves. The object flew noiselessly". (256) The fol owing year (1945), an American artil ery officer stationed on the recently-captured island of Okinawa told of witnessing a strange aerial visitor:

"On a clear, moonlit evening, I was gazing seaward when I suddenly saw a bright speck of light approaching from the south, paral eling the coast.

The light proved to he coming from the rear of a cigar-shaped object which I could see quite clearly. It gave no light out except from the tail.

It passed me at a distance of no more than 500 yards, and must have been considerably closer. I judged its speed at from 200 to 300 miles per hour, at an altitude of not over 400 feet-probably less, since it seemed to pass me at eye level, and I stood no more than 200 feet above sea level.

The object had no wings, nor were there any ports or windows visible. I judged the object to be 30-to40 feet long, with a diameter of six-to-eight feet. The object moved smoothly and silently at a constant speed along the coast until it disappeared from sight". (257) Around the same time, the crew of a Marine transport plane encountered two different types of

UFOs in the skies near the same island. At a distance of about 1/4 mile in clear weather, they spotted a large, cigar-shaped object trailed by three smal er, disc-shaped objects. The discs appeared to be metal ic.

As they watched, the trio of discs seemed to enter into the larger object, which then flew off at tremendous speed and disappeared from view. (258)

Two cases of UFOs "checking out" American ships occurred in the Pacific theater of operations in 1945.

One, involving the Army transport "Delarof", took place off Alaska's Aleutian Islands. It provides an interesting counterpoint to some of the earlier reports we've seen of UFOs disappearing underwater.

This time, the UFO emerged from the ocean and circled the ship.

At least 14 members of the "Delarof" crew witnessed the strange incident. One of them estimated the UFO's size as somewhere between 150 and 250 feet in diameter. It moved with a smooth motion and made no sound.

After circling the ship two or three times, the object flew off in a southerly or southwesterly direction. (259)

The crew of the "Delarof" chose not to fire at their UFO, but that wasn't the case when another UFO dropped in on a group of U.S. Navy warships operating in Pacific waters near the end of the war.

Here's how the amazing incident was described by a crewman aboard one of the vessels involved, the aircraft carrier "Essex":

"(It was a) bright, clear day. Radar reports a bogey coming in on us at 40,000 feet and 4,000

miles per hour".

The men of the Essex knew immediately that they were experiencing something quite out of the ordinary, because both the initial altitude and speed of the UFO were wel beyond the capability of any known aircraft in the world at the time. The crewman's account continued:

"The UFO made a right angle drop over us and came down at 4,000 miles per hour. It stopped dead in the air about 20 feet off the water on the port bow of the fleet. It just hung there (at) point blank range, pacing the fleet".

Not waiting to find out whether their visitor's intentions were hostile or not, orders were given to commence firing at the UFO: "Everything we had was firing at it, and not missing. It was sitting right in front of a battleship, and the 16-inch shel s were hitting it at point blank range".

Incredibly, the UFO seemed to have some kind of invisible protective shield around it:

"Everything was exploding 50 feet away from the craft, and it ignored them. After a few minutes, it started moving at about 15-to-20 miles per hour, on a sightseeing trip. It made a water level tour of the fleet—down the side, across the rear, up the right side to the same area on the starboard side It sat there a few more minutes, then went up from a standing start at 4,000 miles per hour, (made) another right angle turn at 4,000 miles per hour back the way it came. Al the time, we were shel ing it and not missing.

When they started to log the event, orders were given that it was only "an unidentified bogey."

The witness added that the UFO in this remarkable incident was "spherical and about 100 feet in diameter." (260)

Even more UFO activity was reported in the war's European combat areas.

On the Axis side, these included the strange object that appeared over a German air base in Norway one day in 1942. When radar revealed the presence of the unknown intruder, a fighter was sent aloft for a closer look.

The pilot radioed back that he established visual contact with a luminous object at about 10,000

feet. He described it as a streamlined vessel some 300 feet long and 50 feet in diameter.

The UFO, which was flying horizontal y when first sighted, suddenly rose vertical y and disappeared from view at a tremendous speed. (261)

The fol owing year, a German submarine operating in the North Atlantic reported being visited by a strange aerial object about 300 miles west of Ireland.

The U-629 was running on the surface at dusk when an urgent voice was heard on the speaker

tube: "Incoming aerial radar contact bearing north-northwest approaching at high speed!" The captain, who was in the conning tower at the time, ordered the U-boat to make a crash dive. Before entering the hatch, he got a brief look at the object which had triggered the alarm.

It was, he said later, "some sort of strange new aircraft...a flying disk." He estimated its diameter at a little less than the approximately 150-foot length of his own vessel, and said it had a smooth, silver exterior with no sign of any wings, cockpit or motors. Equal y remarkable for 1943, the object was hovering silently next to the sub at a height of between 30 and 50 feet.

The last thing the captain saw before leaving the conning tower was that the UFO "winked white, yel ow and red" lights in a manner that gave him the distinct impression it was trying to communicate with him. The cautious skipper was taking no chances, however, and continued to submerge his boat to the safety of the depths. When the U-629 returned to the surface after a safe interval, there was no sign of its strange visitor. (262)

That same year, a group of Spanish volunteers fighting with the Germans against the Russians on the eastern front witnessed an unusual sight in the skies of Russia.

They were watching an aerial dogfight over their lines when they suddenly noticed a strange-looking aircraft even higher in the sky. According to one of the witnesses, the disc-shaped object seemed to be "watching the battle." Then, he said, the UFO suddenly shot off at a fantastic rate of speed. (263) A German infantryman was equal y at a loss to explain the UFO he saw one night in France the fol owing year (1944).

The metal ic, silver-white object slowly approached his company's position and then stopped and hung silently in the air. Fearing they were about to be attacked by some sort of new Al ied secret weapon, the soldiers opened fire. In response, the UFO emitted an intense light and disappeared. (264) Later that same year, the test pilot of a new German jet-powered fighter encountered a UFO that left his own cutting-edge aircraft in the dust.

He got a quick look at the strange craft before it sped away at a speed he estimated was in excess of 1,200 miles per hour (more than twice the top speed of his jet). He said it was cylinder-shaped and about 300 feet in length, with some sort of openings along its side and what appeared to be an antennae in the front. (265)

Near the end of the war in Europe, a resident of the German city of Dresden observed a UFO

from the ground:

"It happened in March or early April, 1945. I had a clear view of the sky from my position.

My first thought was that it was an airplane. But I could see plainly that it was round, and had neither propel er nor wings. Also, it was hovering noiselessly in the air.

Then it suddenly disappeared like a broken soap bubble. I also recal that the unfamiliar object was silvery-colored and flat-not round like a bal oon". (266) Al ied forces in Europe saw at least as many UFOs as their Axis counterparts.

In 1942, an American bomber on a daytime anti-submarine patrol in the Bay of Biscay off the coast of France suddenly found itself in the role of the hunted instead of the hunter when a UFO came up behind it and flew alongside for 15 nerve-racking minutes.

The plane's crewmembers said their uninvited visitor was a huge, wingless cylinder. Before the UFO executed a 180-degree turn and sped away, one airman photographed it with an aerial camera. A

"perfect print" of the object was turned over to military intel igence, but nothing was ever released publicly.

(267) The folowing year (1943), a woman stationed at a RAF base in southern England said she spotted a strange aerial visitor one night:

"Up in the sky, not very high - I would think as high as a church tower, maybe - over the camp was this long, cigar-shaped thing. I just couldn't believe my eyes.

There were five or six lights like searchlights. The lights were coming from the thing onto the ground. The thing was like a barrage bal oon, but more narrow at the ends, and quite long.

I couldn't say anything to anybody that night, and then the next morning I thought I must be

imagining things, because we didn't hear about UFOs in those days". (268) On D-Day (June 6, 1944), a similar-looking UFO was apparently an interested observer to the Al ied landing at Normandy.

According to a crewman aboard one of the invasion support ships, the "George E. Badger", he watched a wingless, cigar-shaped object cruise offshore for several minutes. The witness said it flew a circular course about 15 feet above the surface of the Channel at a speed too fast to have been a blimp or dirigible. (269)

Later that year, an American B-17 flying from its base in England to bomb Berlin encountered several similar-looking UFOs in the skies over Germany.

According to one of the plane's crew: "(The) objects were silver in color and cylindrical in shape.

We were told that these were experimental aircraft that the Germans were developing". (270) Another American bomber returning to England from a raid on Berlin the fol owing year (1945) had a more eventful aerial encounter with a cigar-shaped object near the German-Dutch border. One of the aircraft's crewmembers described what happened:

"The object pulled up alongside of our B-17, and appeared to just observe us. One of our gunners ran a string of 50-caliber bullets down the length of the object, but we didn't see any effect. Thereupon the object left our vicinity rapidly". (271)

One category of UFOs reported by Al ied airmen with some frequency was given the amusing moniker of foo fighters. According to a wire service story in December, 1944:

"The Germans have produced a secret weapon in keeping with the Christmas season. The new device, which is apparently an air defense weapon, resembles the glass bal s which adorn Christmas trees.

They have been seen hanging in the air over German territory, sometimes singly, sometimes in clusters.

They are colored silver and are apparently transparent". (272) Another newswire service added additional details in a story which ran a few weeks later:

"It seems the Nazis have thrown something new into the night skies over Germany. It is the weird, mysterious foo fighter bal s which race alongside the wings of fighters flying missions over Germany.

Pilots have been encountering this eerie weapon for more than a month in their night flights. No one apparently knows what this sky weapon is.

The bal s of fire appear suddenly, and accompany the planes for miles. They seem to be radio-control ed from the ground, so official intel igence reports reveal".

The article went on to give a first-hand account of an American pilot's encounter with the puzzling phenomenon:

"A foo fighter picked me up recently at 700 feet, and chased me 20 miles down the Rhine Val ey.

I turned to starboard, and two bal s of fire turned with me. I turned to the port side, and they turned with me.

We were going 260 miles an hour, and the bal s were keeping right up with us". (273) An American bomber pilot reported encountering a more colorful bogey on a raid over Munich, Germany in 1944:

"We had broken out of the high scattered clouds when a strange phenomenon occurred.

A light blue colored bal of fire approximately three feet in diameter appeared about 40 feet off of our right wingtip. It actual y flew along with us for about 30 seconds with streams of fire trailing down. To this day, I don't know what it was". (274)

Later that same year, American fighter pilots told of meeting up with a similar aerial phenomenon near the German city of Neustadt. Said one:

"(It was) a gold-colored bal with a metal ic finish. (It) appeared to be moving slowly through the air. As the sun was low, it was impossible to tel whether the sun reflected off it or the light came from within".

Another described the foo fighter as "a phosphorescent golden sphere, three-to-five feet in diameter, flying at 2,000 feet." (275)

The pilot of an American reconnaissance plane recal ed the unfamiliar objects he saw over the Rhine Val ey:

"We had made some pictures, and I was looking ahead to our next photo target when my wingman broke radio silence and said: "Bogeys at 9 o'clock!"

Off my wing, a little below us in the direction of Cologne, I saw four or five objects that looked like silvery footbal s. They didn't seem to be moving, but they must have been, for they stayed even with us.

It flashed through my mind that they were something the Germans had put up there. I watched to see what they would do, but they didn't do anything. As we turned away, I thought they must not be of much value to the Germans". (276)

In case you're wondering, Al ied pilots reported encountering similar bal of light bogeys in the Pacific as wel , albeit less frequently.

In 1944, an American B-29 came under close scrutiny of a UFO over the Indian Ocean, as related by the plane's co-pilot:

"A strange object was pacing us about 500 yards off the starboard wing. It appeared as a spherical object, probably five or six feet in diameter, of a very bright and intense red or orange. It seemed to have a halo effect (and) seemed to throb or vibrate constantly.

Assuming it was some kind of radio-control ed object sent to pace us, I went into evasive action, changing direction constantly as much as 90 degrees. It fol owed our every maneuver for about eight minutes, always holding a position about 500 yards out.

When it left, it made an abrupt 90-degree turn, accelerating rapidly, and disappeared into the overcast". (277)

Other B-29 formations attracted the attention of similar mystery objects during raids over Japan the fol owing year (1945), as described in an Al ied intel igence report at the time:

"A number of Super Fortresses reported having been fol owed or pursued by "red bal s of fire"

described as being approximately the size of a basketbal with a phosphorescent glow. Some were reported to have tails of blinking light.

These "bal s" appeared general y out of nowhere, only one having been seen to ascend from a relatively low altitude to the rear of a B-29. No accurate estimate could be reached as to the distance between the bal s and the B-29s.

No amount of evasion of the most violent nature succeeded in shaking the bal s. They succeeded in fol owing the Super Fortresses through rapid changes of altitude and speed and sharp turns, and held B-29s' courses through clouds. One B-29 reported outdistancing a bal only by accelerating to 295 miles per hour, after which the pursuing bal turned around and headed back to land. Individual pursuits lasted as long as six minutes, and one bal fol owed a Super Fortress 30 miles out to sea.

The origin of the bal s is not known. Indication points to some form of radio-direction, either from the ground or fol owing enemy aircraft". (278)

Aviators weren't the only Al ied forces to encounter mysterious bal s of light over the European battlefields.

A Canadian infantryman recal ed an experience he had:

"This occurred in September, 1944, just outside Antwerp, Belgium, which the Germans were bombarding at the time with V-2 rockets.

At about nine p.m., on looking upward (I) saw a glowing globe traveling from the direction of the front line toward Antwerp. It seemed to be about three or four feet in diameter, and looked as though it was cloudy glass with a light inside. It gave (off) a soft white glow.

Its altitude seemed to be about 40 feet, (and) speed about 30 miles per hour. There was no sound of any sort. I noted that the object was not simply drifting with the

wind, but was obviously powered and control ed.

Immediately (after) it had gone out of view, it was fol owed by another, which in turn was fol owed by five others in al .

During this time, I cal ed some other men out to see, so the objects were observed by about five men. We weren't very impressed at the time, because the Germans were using so many new weapons against us, such as the V-l and V-2. We assumed that these were simply some new sort of device of theirs. Also, remember that these objects were apparently fol owing the same course (as) V-2s which were fal ing on Antwerp regularly at the time". (279)

Thirty members of a U.S. armored division also got a good ground-level look at a group of similar objects near Darmstadt, Germany in March of the fol owing year.

They observed a total of six or seven bright yel ow-orange, round globes fly by at a height of about 150 feet. The UFOs were flying in formation, but exhibited different erratic motions, as if they were individual y control ed.

The witnesses estimated the objects were somewhere between three and four feet in diameter, and said they glowed so brightly that they lit up the trees beneath them as they passed.

The things then began a slow and gradual descent at a speed of about 10 miles per hour, and disappeared into the trees. The soldiers said they could fol ow the objects' course through the forest for another five minutes or so before the light from them could no longer be seen. (280) A second type of UFO encountered with some frequency by Al ied fliers in Europe resembled a smal saucer. Here's how an American bomber pilot described a typical encounter with this phenomenon:

"Suddenly, they'd be on our wing, six or eight of them, flying perfect formation.

You turn and bank, they turn and bank. You climb, they climb. You dive, they dive. You just couldn't shake them.

(They were) little, dirty gray aluminum things, 10 or 12 feet in diameter, shaped just like saucers.

(There were) no cockpits, no windows, no sign of life.

When the things got tired of the game, they would just take off into space and disappear, flying at the most incredible speeds - 5,000 miles an hour or more". (281) Many Al ied airmen believed the UFOs they encountered in the skies over Europe were radical new German weapons.

The conventional wisdom is that if any of the unknown aerial objects referred to as foo fighters were, in fact, secret German inventions, they never reached a stage of development where they posed a serious threat to Al ied aircraft. There are, however, several snippets of wartime intel igence that seem to indicate otherwise.

Consider, for instance, the fol owing ominous incident found among the records of General H. H.

("Hap") Arnold, who commanded the U.S. Army Air Corps during the war:

"On a bombing mission over Stuttgart (Germany) on 6th September 1943, a number of smal , silvery discs were observed from the B-17s. One supposedly hit the wing of an aircraft, and the observers saw the aircraft catch fire. The burning aircraft did not return". (282) Then there's this report from a French agent stationed in Switzerland describing an incident said to have occurred over the German city of Wurtemberg late in the war:

"The circular German fighter without wings or rudder suddenly overtook the four-engined (B-24) Liberator, crossing its flight path at very high speed. When it passed in front of the formation, it gave off a number of little bluish clouds of smoke. A moment later, the American bombers mysteriously caught fire, exploding in the air". (283)

A report from another undercover Al ied informant purported to explain the loss of a dozen American heavy bombers on a flight from England to Germany: "A strange flying machine, hemispherical or circular in shape, attacked them at a fantastic speed, destroying them in a few seconds without using any guns". (284)

Regardless of their offensive capabilities, information which has come to light since the war suggests that scientists of the Third Reich developed aerial devices that were years ahead of anything produced by the Al ies.

Consider, for example, this 1945 memo from a U.S. Army general to a general in the Army Air Force:

"Occupation of German scientific and industrial establishments has revealed the fact that we have been alarmingly backward in many fields of research.

If we do not take this opportunity to seize the apparatus and the brains that developed it and put this combination back to work promptly, we wil remain several years behind while we attempt to cover a field already exploited". (285)

One such development the general may have been referring to was revealed during interrogations of captured German aircraft engineers in the summer of 1945. These experts described a rocket-powered aircraft with a semi-circular wing that curved into the fuselage which had been under development at a secret facility in the mountains of Bavaria. (286)

This is consistent with one of the conclusions of a once-classified U.S. Air Force intel igence assessment conducted in 1949: "At the end of World War II, German aircraft designers had numerous projects underway concerning tail ess aircraft which conceivably could be mistaken for "flying saucers" or disc-like objects". (287)

A scientist who helped develop America's atomic bomb was more specific:

"The first of these "flying saucers" as they were later cal ed-circular in shape, with a diameter of some 45 yards-were built by the specialists Schriever, Habermohl and Miethe.

They were first airborne on February 14,1945 over Prague, and reached in three minutes a height of nearly eight miles. They had a speed of 1,250 miles per hour, which was doubled in subsequent tests.

It is believed that Habermohl fel into the hands of the Russians. Miethe developed at a later date similar "flying saucers" at A.V. Roe Company for the United States". (288) There's also a variety of eyewitness testimony dealing with UFO-type technology in the Nazi arsenal.

A Polish prisoner of war said he saw a saucer-shaped device apparently being tested near Berlin in 1944. The fol owing is quoted from an FBI summary of a statement made to them by the witness in 1957: "While enroute to work in afield, their tractor engine staled on a road through a swamp area. No machinery or other vehicle was then visible, although a noise was heard described as a high-pitched whine similar to that produced by a large electric generator.

An SS guard appeared and talked briefly with the German driver of the tractor, who waited five-to-ten minutes, after which the noise stopped and the tractor engine was started normal y.

Approximately three hours later, in the same swamp area but away from the road where the work crew was cutting hay, he observed a circular enclosure approximately 100-to-150 yards in diameter protected from view by a tarpaulin-type wal approximately 50 feet high.

From (inside), a vehicle was observed to slowly rise vertical y to a height sufficient to clear the wal , and then move slowly horizontal y a short distance out of his view, which was obstructed by nearby trees.

This vehicle, observed from approximately 500 feet, was described as circular in shape, 200-to-300 feet in diameter, and about 14 feet high. (It consisted) of dark gray, stationary top and bottom sections each five-to-six feet high. The approximate three-foot middle section appeared to be a rapidly moving component producing a continuous blur similar to an airplane propel er extending the circumference of the vehicle.

The noise emanating from the vehicle was similar to, but somewhat lower pitch, than the noise previously heard. The engine of the tractor again stal ed, and no effort was made by the driver to start the engine until the noise stopped, after which the engine started normal y". (289) Other reports from this period indicated Hitler's aeronautical engineers tried out some of their radical designs in German-occupied Czechoslovakia.

One source, who was stationed at an airbase in Prague during the war, said he learned that circular aircraft were tested there as early as 1942. He never actual y saw one himself, he explained, because al windows overlooking the airfield were blacked out and anyone caught looking in that direction would be shot. He did, however, often hear "deafening" engine noise coming from the airfield unlike

anything from normal airplanes. (290)

A German air force pilot claimed he was one of several witnesses to a short flight by a flying disc at an airfield in the Czech capital in 1943:

"I was with my flight comrades on the airstrip. The device was inside the hangar.

(It was) a disc some (16-20 feet) in diameter. Its body (was) relatively large at the center.

Underneath, it (had) four tal , thin legs. Color: aluminum. Height: almost as tal as a man. Thickness: some (12-18 inches), with a rim of external rods, perhaps square orifices. The upper part of the body (almost a third of the total height) was shrunken over the upper half of the disc. It was flat and rounded.

Along with my friends, I saw the device emerge from the hangar. It was then that we heard the roar of the engines. We saw the side of the disc begin to rotate, and the vehicle began moving slowly and in a straight line toward the end of the field.

It then rose (about three feet) into the air. After moving around some (1,000 feet) at that altitude, it stopped again. Its landing was rather rough.

We had to leave the area while some custodians pushed the vehicle toward the hangar. Later on, the "thing" took off again, managing to reach the end of the aerodrome this time". (291) Viktor Schauberger, an Austrian scientist in the employ of the Third Reich, claimed that a circular aircraft of his invention logged a much more impressive test flight in Czechoslovakia a few months before the war in Europe ended:

"The "flying saucer" which was flight tested on 19 February 1945 near Prague, and which attained a height of (about 50,000 feet) in three minutes and a horizontal speed of (1,364 miles) per hour, was constructed according to a model built at Mauthausen concentration camp in col aboration with the first-class engineers and stress analysts assigned to me from the prisoners there.

From what I understand, just before the end of the war, the machine is supposed to have been destroyed on (General) Keitel's orders. That's the last I heard of it". (292) A man who served in US Army counter-intel igence during the war said he was a member of a team that examined a completely diffefent configuration of advanced German aerial device in a secret manufacturing complex in the Harz Mountains:

"It was a large, cylindrical-shaped, metal ic craft resting on two long, wide skids. lt was painted a gray-green color, and did not have any markings or insignia whatsoever.

I gathered that it was partial y assembled, and when the U.S. Army was drawing near, the Germans hastily removed the propulsion system and other sensitive items. The propulsion system had been located in the bel y of the craft. You could see where it had been removed.

The bottom of the craft was somewhat flattened, and the top was rounded. The nose of the craft was rounded.

I went al through the thing, and I noticed that one of the two front windows had been broken out. They appeared to be made of very thick glass. Several of the gauges were missing from the control panel. There were round porthole windows on each side. The outside of the craft was smooth with riveted joints.

It was larger than any World War II submarine. I wil estimate that it was several hundred feet long, maybe 30 feet high, and perhaps 20 feet across the top.

We were told that the Germans designed it to go to the moon, and that they had flown al of the operational craft which had been kept at the plant to South America and Africa". (293) Nazi Germany was known to have exported a number of high-tech weapons to its al y in the Pacific, Japan. Among other things, disassembled V-1 guided missiles and jet fighter planes were shipped to the Japanese via long-range submarines. However, they apparently arrived too late in the war to be duplicated in significant quantities.

More germane to the subject of UFOs is the fol owing story told to an American friend by the son of a Japanese aircraft industry technician:

"In July of 1945, two and a half months after the war ended in Germany, a huge German transport submarine brought to Japan the latest of German inventions-two spherical, wingless devices.

The Japanese R&D team put the machines together fol owing the German directions. There was something very bizarre and otherworldly standing in front of them-a bal -shaped flying device without wings or propel ers. Nobody knew how it worked.

The fuel was added (and) the start button of this unmanned machine was pressed. It disappeared with a roar and flames into the sky. The team never saw it again.

The engineers were so frightened by the unexpected might of the machine that they promptly dynamited the second prototype, and chose to forget the whole incident". (294) (The description of this device obviously bears more than a passing resemblance to descriptions of the bal of light variety of foo fighters.)

In addition, a German U-boat sunk by the British in the Strait of Malacca in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) in 1944 was presumably enroute to (or possibly from) Japan.

Divers later discovered that the sub's cargo included 33 tons of mercury. One radical type of new propulsion system German scientists were working on at war's end reportedly involved the use of electrified mercury vapor. (295)

One other point needs to be discussed with regard to German saucer development. You'll recal from the last chapter that there were several reports of crashes involving presumably alien craft in Europe in the 1930s: in Italy (1933), Germany (1936) and Poland (1938).

Since Mussolini's Italy became an al y of Hitler, and Poland was overrun by German forces in 1939, it's conceivable that information from al three crashes could have found its way into the hands of Hitler's scientists, who may have been able to use it to develop their own flying saucers. In addition to these incidents where the Nazis possibly acquired alien craft shortly after crashes, there's another report that they may also have come into possession of one that crashed much earlier.

According to the story, in 1937 a German archeological expedition was in eastern Turkey searching for the remains of Noah's Ark when local residents told them about another curiosity in the area.

The locals said that many generations ago, a strange, shiny "house" had fal en from the sky with a deafening noise. A vil ager who approached the downed object said it "sang," was warm to the touch and emitted a noxious odor.

When the archeologists reported the tale to Berlin, a team was dispatched to try to locate and recover the object, whichjhey succeeded in doing. It was described as a disc-shaped craft about 80 feet in diameter and 26 feet thick.

The recovery team could find no means of entering the strange object, but scientists back in Germany may have had better luck. It was reportedly

transported to a converted salt mine near Munich in late 1938. (296)

Reverse engineering of alien technology might also help explain some of the other German weapon developments that were far ahead of anything Al ied scientists came up with, including: stealth (radar invisible) technology; bal istic missiles; jet- and rocket-powered aircraft; radio-and TV control ed bombs; surface-to-air missiles; air-to-air missiles; submarine-launched missiles; helicopters; vertical takeoff, flying wing and delta wing airplanes; radioactive artil ery shel s; and night vision devices. (297) Incidental y, the case has been made elsewhere that the United States benefited in a similar fashion by the reverse engineering of technology, it acquired from the 1947 Roswel crash (including transistors, lasers, integrated circuits, fiber optics, bulletproof fabric and accelerated particle beam weapons). (298)

In addition, there are some intriguing reports suggesting that the Al ied side may also have come into possession of alien technology during World War II.

One such report involves an object al eged to have crashed somewhere in the British Isles. It was related by the syndicated columnist Dorothy Kilgal en in an article written in 1955, but a check of her sources revealed that the incident itself occurred sometime during the war. In her column, she stated:

"I can report today on a story which is positively spooky, not to mention chil ing.

British scientists and airmen, after examining the wreckage of one mysterious flying ship, are convinced these strange aerial objects are not optical il usions or Soviet inventions, but are flying saucers

which originate on another planet.

The source of my information is a British official of cabinet rank who prefers to remain unidentified. "We believe, on the basis of our inquiry thus far, that the saucers were staffed by smal men, probably under four feet tal . It's frightening, but there's no denying the flying saucers come from another planet." This official quoted scientists as saying a flying ship of this type could not have possibly been constructed on Earth. The British government, I learned, is withholding an official report on the flying saucer examination at this time, possibly because it does not wish to frighten the public". (299) In this country, a UFO crash is al eged to have occurred near Cape Girardeau, Missouri in 1941.

The fol owing recounting of the incident is by the granddaughter of a local minister who was taken by police to the scene of what was assumed to be an airplane crash:

"He said they drove out of town 13-15 miles or so, then parked the cars on the side of the road and had to walk 1/4 of a mile or so into afield, where he could see fire burning.

Grandfather said it wasn't an airplane or like any craft he'd ever seen. It was broken and scattered al around, but one large piece was stil together. It appeared to have a rounded shape with no edges or seams. It had a very shiny, metal ic finish.

You could see inside one section, and see what looked like a metal chair with a panel with many dials and gauges, none familiar-looking to him. He said that when he got there, men were already sifting through things. There were some police officers, plainclothes people and military men.

There were three bodies not human that had been taken from the wreckage and laid on the ground. Grandfather said prayers over them, so he got a close look, but didn't touch them. He didn't know what had kil ed them. They didn't appear to have any injuries, and they weren't burnt.

It was hard for him to tel if they had on suits or if it was their skin, but they were covered head to foot in what looked like wrinkled aluminum foil. He could see no hair on the bodies, and they had no ears. They were smal -framed like a child about four feet tal , but had larger heads and longer arms. They had very large, oval-shaped eyes, no noses - just holes - no lips (and) just smal slits for mouths". (300) A man claimed he observed multiple UFOs at a military base in California the fol owing year (1942). The witness, a broadcast company executive, provided a number of technical details about the supposed alien craft when he spoke to a civic group in Colorado a decade later, as reported in a local newspaper at the time:

"The speaker, al eging that he was inside one of the seven flying saucers, said that the mechanisms are giant flywheels covered with metal skins. He stated that the saucers are powered by electrostatic turbines, and have cabins in the center. The cabins are pressurized, and have an atmosphere containing 30

percent oxygen and 70 percent nitrogen.

Through use of the flywheel, a magnetic field is created wnich permits the saucers to travel at tremendous speeds. They are put together in five sections, and come apart easily after the center section is removed."I have been in one which is 100 feet in diameter and 18 feet thick," (he) stated. "The sleeping quarters for the crew members are tubes with caps on the ends. The cabin was pressurized and air-conditioned." (301)

Another incident resulting in the al eged acquisition of a downed UFO by the U.S. military during World War II was contained in the account of a Navy enlisted man stationed on the Hawai an island of Oahu.

According to the sailor, the incident began when he came upon an igloo-shaped craft resting on the ground near Kaneohe one morning in 1944. He said it was approximately 50 feet in diameter, and had a transparent dome on top with a gold-colored device that reminded him of a weather vane spinning inside. Standing around the object was a group of "people" about 4-1/2 feet tal. The witness described them as having slight builds and short, black hair, with large, dark eyes and heavy eyebrows. Each was wearing a heavy belt with a box-like apparatus attached to the front of it.

The witness claimed he got into a scuffle with one of the entities, and wound up with one of the box-like devices. He said they then instructed him to return the fol owing day, which he did.

During a conversation with the ufonauts the next day, the man said they told him they were from a place 21 light years from Earth, and they were here now to check on colonization efforts they'd carried out eons ago.

The witness' second meeting with the aliens was al egedly observed by another sailor, who promptly reported the incident to naval intel igence. During subsequent interrogation, the witness turned over the black box and revealed the landing site of the UFO.

The man claimed security forces shot down the craft when it tried to take off, and captured at least one of its crew (a female) alive. He said the relatively intact UFO was taken to San Diego by ship.

He didn't know what became of the captured alien. (302)

Recently, some UFO researchers claimed to have uncovered a memo purportedly written by President Franklin Roosevelt in February, 1944 and addressed to "The Special Committee on Non-Terrestrial Science and Technology." If authentic, this document appears to confirm that the United States had acquired certain unspecified alien technology, presumably from one or more crashed UFOs.

Here's the text of this remarkable memo in its entirety:

"I agree with the OSRD proposal of the recommendation put forward by Dr. Bush and Professor Einstein that a separate program be initiated at the earliest possible time. I also agree that application of non-terrestrial know-how in atomic energy must be used in perfecting super weapons of war to affect the complete defeat of Germany and Japan. In view of the cost already incurred in the atomic bomb program, it would at this time be difficult to approve without further support of the Treasury Department and the military. I therefore have decided to forego such an enterprise. From the point of view of the informed members of the United States, our principle object is not to engage in exploratory research of this kind but to win the war as soon as possible. Various points have been raised about the difficulties such an endeavor would pose to the already hardened research for advanced weapons programs and support groups in our war effort and I agree that now is not the time. It is my personal judgment that, when the war is won, and peace is once again restored, there wil come a time when surplus funds may be available to pursue a program devoted to understanding non-terrestrial science and its technology which is stil greatly undiscovered. I have had private discussions with Dr. Bush on this subject and the advice of several eminent scientist who believe the United States should take every advantage of such wonders that have come to us. I have heard the arguments of General Marshal and other members of the military that the United States must assume its destiny in this matter for the sake of the Nation's security in the post-war world and I have given assurances that such wil be the case.

I appreciate the effort and time spent in producing valuable insights into the proposal to find ways of advancing our technology and national progress and in coming to grips with the reality that our planet is not the only one harboring intel igent life in the universe. I also commend the committee for the organization and planning that is evident in Dr. Bush's proposal and the delicate way in which it was presented. I trust the committee wil appreciate the situation on which this office must render its decision".

(303) Not al aleged ET visits to Earth during World War II came to a crashing conclusion.

In 1940, a Montana miner laid claim to an amazing encounter with the occupants of a landed UFO near Helena. He first spotted the craft hovering just above the ground near where he was working.

The discshaped object was about 100 feet in diameter and 35 feet high: "(Like) two soup plates, one inverted over the other, and resembling stainless steel in color, though not as bright and shiny".

The witness said a set of stairs suddenly emerged from the bottom of the UFO, and a normal-looking man came down them and asked the witness' permission to draw some water from the stream the miner had dammed.

Then the ufonaut invited the witness to go aboard the craft, which he did. During a conversation with the first occupant and another one inside, the miner was told that the two were 609 years old and came from a distant planet They said they needed the water because their craft was powered by hydrogen

extracted from water, and that it created its own gravitational field using a system of flywheels.

The witness said he was then escorted from the craft, and he watched as it ascended vertical y before flying off at high speed. (304)

Around the same time (either 1940 or 1941), a young man came upon what was evidently a landed UFO and its diminutive occupants near St. Clair, Pennsylvania.

The witness was walking on a rural road when his attention was drawn to a loud sound in some nearby woods. Venturing nearer, he saw what looked like an

"aluminum building" sitting among the trees in an area where he knew there was no such building.

Next to the "building," he spotted something else that didn't belong there: "six smal men mil ing about or looking for something on (the) ground." Deciding he'd seen enough, the witness quickly retreated from the scene. When he revisited the site later, the little men and the aluminum object were gone. (305) An unusual noise and a smal humanoid occupant also figured in the 1942 incident reported by a young shepherd girl in western Greece:

"I heard a strange sound that seemed to come from a metal ic machine which was flying slowly over the trees, causing them to creak. Then I saw a flying object descending in great circles.

The object was shaped like a big plate, or like two plates glued together on their rims, with two projections like antennas. It was silvery, and must have had a width of (6-9 feet).

The object landed on a hil which was about (500 feet) away from me. It was difficult for me to see the thing, because of the thick forest. So I approached the scene in order to see better.

I then saw a gray-colored "man" with a height of (three feet). He was mostly like a robot, something unheard of and completely unknown in 1942. He wore a suit-like garment, and something resembling a silver crash helmet. He started walking in circles where the mysterious vehicle had landed.

Then, I don't know what happened to me. I felt like something very, very terrible was about to happen, and I started running away, scared to death. So did the sheep.

An hour later, I again approached the landing spot. I saw my sheepdogs barking, seemingly terrified. But there was no trace of the strange craft and the mysterious "man." (306) Another UFO struck terror in both a human and a canine witness in a 1945 incident in Finland.

A woman became alarmed by the sight of a 35-foot something that suddenly came streaking in her direction from across a lake. She described it as "a dazzling bal of fire as bright as the sun." She dove to the ground, expecting an impact.

When nothing happened, she looked up and first saw a large dog seemingly paralyzed with fear.

She fol owed the direction of the animal's gaze, and spotted a "canoe" unlike any she'd seen before. In it were two men. One, who was tal and thin and wore what looked like green coveral s, stood in the front.

The other individual was seated and appeared to be steering an engine housed inside a large transparent globe. (307)

Final y, there were at least two claims of UFO abductions during World War II.

In 1942, a man was guarding a radar station on the east coast of England one night when he observed an aerial light inside a cloud approaching his position. Before he knew what was happening, an object descended from the cloud and projected some kind of beam at him.

Helplessly, he was drawn into the object, where he found himself the unwil ing guest of a crew that included both smal and average-size individuals. The latter wore what looked like thick goggles. The witness said he was forced to lie on a table while several of the normal-size entities performed a physical examination of him. The next thing he remembered was finding himself back at his sentry post at the radar station. (308)

Two years later (in 1944), a family in Pennsylvania underwent a terrifying experience at the hands of a crew of scarier-looking entities.

The incident began when family members were awakened at their rural home near the town of Rochester by a loud sound accompanied by a bright flash. When the head of the family went to investigate, he was confronted by six figures standing about 4-1/2 feet tal . One had on what looked like a brown robe of some kind, while the others wore brown, metal ic suits that glowed. Each was surrounded

by a halo-like light.

The man noted several additional physical features of the intruders: "Their heads seemed quite large. Their arms were long, with long, thin fingers. (They had) a slit for a mouth".

The witness' last conscious memory was of being taken aboard some kind of craft which was sitting on the ground nearby. When he awoke the next morning, he discovered a circular burned area of ground 25 feet in diameter next to his house that hadn't been there previously. (309) Chapter 8

Run-Up To Roswell

The explosive increase in UFOs witnessed during World War II was merely a prelude to the mushrooming anomalous aerial activity of the years that fol owed.

A growing number of people during the post-war period were open to the possibility of extraterrestrial visitors. Advocates of the ET hypothesis suggested that mankind's detonation of atomic weapons may have triggered heightened observation of this planet by visitors from other worlds.

Others saw post-war UFOs as an extension of wartime German saucer research. Some believed one or more Al ied nations were now secretly carrying on disc development using captured German craft and captured German scientists. (It's known that both the United States and Russia did just that in the case of German rocket technology.)

A 1947 U.S. Air Force intel igence report managed to cover nearly al the bases with regard to the origin of UFOs:

"This strange phenomenon may be considered, in view of certain observations, as long-range aircraft capable of a high rate of climb, high cruising speed, highly maneuverable and capable of being flown in very tight formation.

These so-cal ed "flying saucers" (are) assumed to be manned craft of unknown origin. While there remains the possibility of Russian manufacture, based on the thinking and actual accomplishments of the Germans, it is the considered opinion of some elements that the object(s) may in fact represent an interplanetary craft of some kind". (310)

A few people even suspected Nazi holdouts as the source of post-war UFOs.

In 1943, the head of the German navy, Admiral Karl Doenitz, reportedly announced to a class of naval cadets: "The German U-boat fleet is proud to have made an earthly paradise, an impregnable fortress, for the Fuehrer somewhere in the world". (311) The admiral didn't give any clues about the location of this final

redoubt, but speculation has centered largely on two areas. One is South America, which in 1945 was home to large colonies of German immigrants, sizable German economic investments and several sympathetic governments (especial y Argentina and Paraguay).

A 1945 memo from the U.S. Treasury secretary to the Secretary of State observed: "Recent reports indicate clearly that Argentina is not only a likely refuge for Nazi criminals, but also has been and stil is the focal point of Nazi financial and economic activity in this hemisphere". (312) By some accounts, the military dictatorship of General Juan Peron and his wife Eva ("Evita") made as many as 10,000 blank Argentinian passports available to various clandestine Nazi escape networks operating out of Italy, Spain and other European countries after the war. (313) Among former members of the Nazi regime wanted for war crimes, concentration camp director Adolph Eichmann, notorious Auschwitz doctor Joseph Mengele and Hitler deputy Martin Bormann al reportedly spent time in Argentina after their escape from Germany. (Eichmann was kidnapped by Israeli agents and smuggled out of Argentina in 1960. The other two men are both believed to have died while hiding in South America sometime during the 1970s.) (314)

According to a young American adventurer writing in 1986:

"I was told that there is an entire city in central Argentina full of ex-Nazis and their families. No journalists, investigators or strangers are al owed into the city, and just who is living there is largely a

secret. One Japanese journalist barely escaped with his life a few years ago after trying to do a story on this "lost city of the Third Reich." (315)

The other leading candidate for a Nazi shangri-la is located farther south, in Antarctica.

Proponents of the Antarctic redoubt scenario maintain that elements of the defeated Third Reich retreated to a secret underground base previously prepared for them in the frozen fastness of the remote subcontinent. Among other things, they point to the fact that Germany had a long history of Antarctic explorations. Known German expeditions took place in 1873, 1910, 1925 and just prior to the start of the Second World War in 1939.

Supporters of the frozen Fourth Reich theory make much of a military expedition to Antarctica in 1946-1947 cal ed Operation High Jump, which was led by the veteran American polar explorer Admiral Richard Byrd.

In a press release prior to the expedition's departure for Antarctica, Byrd announced the ostensible aim of the endeavor: "The purposes of the operation are primarily of a military nature, to train naval personnel and to test ships, planes and equipment under frigid zone conditions". (316) Whatever the intended purpose of the expedition, rumors soon surfaced that Byrd's forces engaged hostile disc-shaped aircraft of unknown origin in the interior of Antarctica. For whatever reason, the expedition - which was provisioned for 6-8 months - ended after only two months.

Before he left the region, Byrd spoke to the press, after which a Chilean newspaper reported:

"Admiral Byrd declared today that it was imperative for the United States to initiate immediate defense measures against hostile regions.

The admiral further stated that he didn't want to frighten anyone unduly, but that it was a bitter reality that in case of a new war, the continental United States would be attacked by flying objects which could fly from pole to pole at incredible speeds". (317) When he returned to Washington, Byrd reportedly urged the U.S. to use Antarctica as an atomic test site. (As far as we know, his recommendation was not acted upon.) (318) As far-fetched as the idea of lost Nazi legions at the South Pole sounds on its face, there've nevertheless been a number of curious unexplained incidents in the supposedly uninhabited region in the years since World War II.

If the 1956 account of four Chilean scientists is accurate, someone's UFOs were flitting about the skies of Antarctica more than a decade after the war ended. According to a subsequent report of the incident in question:

"One man stepped outside and noticed two, metal ic, cigar-shaped objects in a vertical position, perfectly stil and silent, and flashing vividly the reflected rays of the sun. The things looked utterly solid, with smooth, polished surfaces.

He cal ed a second man to come look at the "spindles." Then they moved to another vantage point about 100 yards away to see if some sort of atmospheric optical effect could be causing them. They did not change appearance.

Upon returning to their tent area, two more men also saw the objects. The uppermost object tilted into a horizontal position and started to brighten and emit several colors. Then it began to move, and executed a number of maneuvers-90-degree turns, zigzag flight, instantaneous starts and stops, etc. Then it came to a stop and hovered again.

The second object then began to fly around for three minutes like the first object had just finished doing. Then it, too, stopped and hovered.

Using a theodolite, the altitude of the objects was determined to be about 24,000 feet, with each cigar about 450 feet long and 75 feet in diameter.

One of the men aimed a polarized spotlight at one of the objects, which flashed a bright light in return and descended in altitude. After a long pause, it rose again to its original position and stopped.

Then it conducted another fantastic sky dance. Its velocity was measured at 24,000 miles per hour starting from a dead stop.

The objects eventual y disappeared from view because of the clouds that came in". (319)

A couple of years later (in 1958), two American scientists spotted a white plume coming out of the icy Antarctic landscape. When they reached the spot, they were surprised to find it was caused by a strong-smel ing cloud of steam.

The pair was even more amazed by what they saw in the middle of the cloud: a dome-shaped structure approximately six feet high and 12 feet in diameter with a shiny, glass-like surface.

Then things real y got bizarre, as related by one of the witnesses:

"Being both fascinated and frightened at the same time, I ran towards the dome. At first, I thought someone had got there before me. I saw two moving figures. My blood froze. They were not human, but round "things."

(They were) yel owish, with a height of hardly more than (three feet), like half-inflated bal oons, tottering and wheeling around. Near them or on them was a light which seemed to me like an acetylene lamp.

A little bal seemed to explode in front of me, spreading a crackling rose of blue sparks. I started to run. "Get away!" I shouted to my friend, who had stayed behind.

We only turned around to look when we were back in the safety of the weasel. For a few moments, we saw the reflections of the dome, and then another white whirl. When the cloud faded, there was nothing at al on the ice". (320)

That same year, Soviet scientists reported another Antarctic anomaly which they spotted from the air: what appeared to be wal s and buildings covered by great slabs of ice. The Russians said the structures were "too geometrical" to be natural formations, and claimed they saw human-shaped figures moving among the structures. (321)

In 1965, 17 persons at a Chilean base in Antarctica observed a strange "lens-shaped" aerial visitor. In the words of the base's commander:

"What we sighted was something real - a solid object which was moving at incredible speeds, performed maneuvers, emitted a greenish light and caused interference in the electro-magnetic instruments of the Argentine base situated close to ours.

It hovered in mid-air after performing one of its maneuvers, remaining motionless for about 20

minutes, and then moving away at high speed. We observed this object through high-powered binoculars".

(322) For its part, the government of Argentina released the folowing account of the incident:

"The naval garrison in (the) Argentinian Antarctic noticed a huge, lens-shaped flying object. It seemed to be solid, of a reddish-green color chiefly, sometimes changing to a yel ow, blue, white or orange shade. The object moved in a zigzag towards the east, but changed course several times toward the west and north at varying speeds and quite silently. It was poised motionless for about 15 minutes". (323) During the same decade, a visiting team of international scientists not only reported several sightings of UFOs in the skies over the frozen continent, but they also encountered some high strangeness emanating from beneath the ice.

The group described hearing unexplained rumbling and humming noises, along with what sounded for al the world like heavy machinery at work. However, there were no known activities being conducted by any nation at the time that could have accounted for such sounds. (324) Some unusual U-boat activity in the South Atlantic in the period immediately fol owing World War II could conceivably bolster either the South American or Antarctic scenario.

In July of 1945 (two months after Germany surrendered), two German submarines docked at a port in Argentina. They were found to be carrying less than full cargoes consisting of cigarettes and liquor.

When the vessels' crews were questioned about their recent movements, they were less than forthcoming about the precise nature of their final mission.

Even less was learned about another German U-boat that turned up in Argentina a month later, according to the U.S. ambassador:

"This time, men and freight had disappeared into thin air. I firmly believe they carried highly

secret component parts of Germany's secret weapons.

Our intel igence officers were handicapped in their mission in Argentina by complete lack of cooperation from the government. In fact, the Argentine authorities protected the Nazis and consistently concealed information that would have been of assistance to us.

We were never able to ascertain the full scope of Nazi infiltration in the country. We traced $400

mil ion of Nazi funds to Buenos Aires. Then it just disappeared". (325) Moreover, a 1996 article in the New York Times suggested German U-boats may not have always used the standard ports of entry into Argentina:

"In the decades after World War II, rumors swirled through Argentina that German submarines carrying Nazi war criminals and booty landed in Patagonia, Argentina's vast southern wilderness.

A few days ago, a local newspaper published a photograph the paper says was taken in the late 1940s that appears to show a Nazi submarine in a Patagonian

bay. Then, several people came forward and said that in past years they had seen the submarine, at times half submerged, near San Matias Gulf.

(An elderly woman) who lives near the gulf said she remembers seeing a submarine through the window of her house near the end of the war. "It disappeared after a while, and then an airplane passed. I suppose it was looking for the sub. There were reports on the radio that German boats were in the area."

(326) Patagonia is also the region of Argentina nearest to Antarctica.

Another puzzling incident involving a German U-boat was reported by a French newspaper shortly after it occurred in 1946:

"Almost 1-1/2 years after cessation of hostilities in Europe, the Icelandic whaler "Juliana" was stopped by a large German U-boat in the region around the (Falkland Islands).

(The) submarine surfaced and raised the German naval flag of mourning. The submarine commander sent out a boarding party, which approached the "Juliana" in a rubber dinghy, and having boarded the whaler, demanded of Captain Hekla part of his fresh food stocks. The request was made in the definite tone of an order to which resistance would have been unwise.

The German officer spoke a correct English, and paid for his provisions in U.S. dol ars, giving the captain a bonus of $10 for each member of the Juliana crew.

Whilst the foodstuffs were being transferred to the submarine, the submarine commander informed Captain Hekla of the exact location of a large school of whales. Later, the Juliana found the school of whales where designated". (327)

Around the same time, a French news agency weighed in with this supporting statement: "The continuous rumors about German U-boat activity in the region between the southernmost tip of Latin America and the continent of Antarctica are based on true happenings". (328) Whatever their origin-and they may not al have been coming from one place-there were increasing numbers of reports of UFOs around the globe in the period fol owing the end of World War II.

The pilot of an American military transport plane provided the fol owing account of an incident that occurred over the state of Florida in April of 1946:

"At approximately 6 p.m., while flying a C-47 at 4,000 feet northeast of Tampa, I observed what I thought to be a shooting star to the southeast over the Atlantic Ocean. My co-pilot and my engineer both observed this object at the same time.

This object continued toward us on a col ision course at our exact altitude. At about 1,000 yards, it veered to cross our path.

We observed it to be a long, cylindrical shape approximately twice the size of a B-29, with luminous portholes".

The witness estimated the object was traveling at the incredible speed of 2,000 miles per hour when it disappeared over the horizon. (329)

Around the same time, a motorist was attracted to a gleam in the sky while driving near the town of Lafayette, New York. Glancing upward, he discovered the source was sunlight reflecting off of a large, metal ic, cigar-shaped object which was hovering overhead. The man said the UFO was somewhere

between 300 and 400 feet in length, with pointed ends and no protrusions of any kind.

The witness-estimated he observed the object for a couple of minutes until it dfsjippeared-instantly.

One moment it was there, and the next it was gone. (330)

A short time after this incident, a Navy officer was attracted by a whistling sound directly above him one day in La Grange, Florida. He gave the fol owing description of what he observed when he looked up:

"I saw a dark "flying footbal " flying from west to east at about 1,000 feet elevation, possibly less, at the speed of a light plane-say 125 miles per hour.

There was no sound of any engine. It had no wings or other appendages, no props and no trail of smoke in the back. It appeared 15-to-20 feet in diameter.

I watched it curve smoothly in an arc to the southeast and vanish in a cloud bank. My wife and the rest of the family heard the queer noise and al rushed out to see what it was. My wife glimpsed it as it vanished in the clouds". (331)

Later in 1946, two people watched a UFO disappear into a bank of clouds near San Diego, California:

"We were on high ground that curves southwards from Morrow Bay. The sun had just gone down when suddenly a dark object appeared in the sky.

It had a bat-like appearance, owing to the curvature of its wings. The strange machine seemed to stand stil for several minutes, and its form was very distinct.

Suddenly, it either lowered itself or the cloud mist made an upward movement. The machine passed behind the cloud and did not reappear. Immediately afterwards, a great flush of color spread over the sea". (332)

UFO sightings outside the United States in 1946 included the flotil a of smal , disc-shaped objects observed by a family at Lake Nipissing in the Canadian province of Ontario.

The witnesses said about a dozen of the strange little craft landed on the frozen lake surface about 75 feet from them with a rotating motion, then proceeded to repeatedly rise several feet into the air and descend to the ice again.

When one of the witnesses approached the objects, they suddenly took off rapidly at a 45-degree angle, leaving behind a series of black marks on the ice. (333) Later that year, a much larger disc-shaped UFO made a dramatic appearance over a town in Portugal. Witnesses said the object was enormous and had a green iridescent glow. It hovered motionless over the community for about five minutes before flying off in a southerly direction. (334) The fol owing year (1947) was destined to become the year of Roswel . But that now-famous incident didn't occur until July. There was plenty of other UFO activity in the first half of the year.

The month of March proved an especial y auspicious period. In one incident, a New York motorist came upon a disc-shaped object hovering in a field near the town of Palatine. The craft was about 60 feet in diameter and 15 feet thick. When first spotted, the UFO was just off the ground. As the witness watched, it rose vertical y and then disappeared from view in a matter of seconds. (335) Around the same time, a West Virginia woman observed a strange aerial object one afternoon unlike anything she'd ever seen before:

"This strange object was round and silver in color. The speed I wouldn't think was great, because it appeared to be floating across the sky.

I wondered why it didn't make a noise. Airplanes at the same distance and height I could always hear their motor. It appeared to be about the size of a good bathroom.

The sun hit it and it gave off reflections like a tin can when the sun shines down on it. It seemed to be silver around the sides, but on top it seemed more white, like the color of silk". (336) The object the woman saw may have been a large weather bal oon, but the same explanation doesn't hold air when it comes to the encounter a man in Maine had in either March or April.

He was driving near Augusta one morning when he spotted several "saucer-like objects" over the local airport:

"The objects were fairly close to the ground, and appeared to scale like a pie plate through the air.

They revolved and hovered over the landing field. They were not conventional aircraft. There was a trail of smoke coming from the edge of the revolving objects".

The witness added that the UFOs appeared to be about 40 feet in diameter and reflected the sunlight. (337)

In mid-May, a group of seven railroad workers watched a UFO perform aerial acrobatics near Manitou Springs, Colorado.

The silver object approached from the northwest and positioned itself about 1,000 feet above them, revolving as it hovered. Then, according to one of the witnesses: "(It moved) erratical y in wide circles. It reflected light like metal, but intermittently, as though the angle of reflection might be changing from time to time".

After about 20 minutes of such maneuvers, the UFO "disappeared in a straight line in the west-northwest." (338)

Later the same month, a fisherman got a much briefer look at a formation of four similar-looking UFOs near Beaufort, South Carolina.

The witness said the "highly-polished discs" were spinning on their axes as they flew by noiselessly. He noticed a "circular rim or projection about one-quarter of the way from the edges" on the underside of each craft. (339)

The fol owing sightings of UFOs in the months leading up to Roswel were contained in a U.S.

Air Force intel igence report from the period:

"During April 1947, two employees of the Weather Bureau station at Richmond, Virginia reported seeing a strange metal ic disk on three occasions through the theodolite. One observation was at 15,000 feet when a disk was fol owed for 15 seconds. The disk appeared metal ic (and) shaped something like an el ipse with a flat bottom and a round top. It appeared below the (weather) bal oon, and was much larger in size. The disk appeared to be moving rather rapidly.

The fol owing month, a field engineer for RCA reported a disk flying near his home in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The object was thought to be at an altitude between 10,000 and 18,000 feet, and was moving toward the north at a high rate of speed, leaving no trail effects.

While flying at 10,000 feet 30 miles northwest of Lake Meade, Nevada, an Air Force lieutenant reported seeing five or six white circular objects in close formation and traveling at an estimated speed of 285 miles per hour. This sighting occurred on 28 June 1947.

The fol owing day, a party of three, two of them scientists, were motoring toward the White Sands, New Mexico V-2 firing grounds and reported seeing a large disk or sphere moving horizontal y at a high speed and an estimated altitude of 10,000 feet. It was of uniform shape and had no protruding surfaces such as wings. The object was in sight for about 60 seconds before it disappeared to the northeast. The three observers agreed on the details of the sighting except that one thought he had seen vapor trails". (340)

There were also several significant UFO sightings outside the United States in the months immediately preceding the incident at Roswel .

One was recounted years later by one of the participants, who was a young boy at the time of the incident:"I was in company with my schoolmate in a smal country

town in Australia. It was a dark and cold night. Al of a sudden, the whole area around us lit up like daylight.

My mate and I got off our bicycles and looked in terror at the huge UFO just above our heads.

(It was) resting on the power lines, and appear(ed) to have difficulty in coming down closer because it was in between shops. We had a clear view for at least three minutes.

Several months later in a close area, Australian newspapers gave coverage to people seeing strange objects flying in the sky, and several months after that you have the Roswel incident". (341) Another occurred one night about a week before Roswel , off the coast of the east African nation of Kenya.

A dozen passengers and crewmen aboard the steamer "Llandovery Castle" reported the vessel was paced by a huge, low-flying UFO. The mystery craft was described as dirigible-shaped and twice the length of the ship - or about 1,000 feet long. It was completely silent, and appeared to have a shiny surface.

According to the ship's log, the strange aerial visitor descended to an altitude of about 100 feet and proceeded to fol ow a paral el course at a distance of about half a mile. A bril iant white light projected from the underside of the UFO. After several minutes, the light was extinguished and the object rose and was swal owed by the darkness. (342)

Several UFO incidents in the immediate pre-Roswel period included encounters with the craft's occupants.

In August of 1946, a civilian employee of Tinker Air Force Base outside Oklahoma City, Oklahoma found an unusual visitor waiting for her when she arrived home. Hovering over some trees about 100 yards away was a metal ic, lens-shaped UFO.

The witness estimated the object was about 75 feet in diameter, with a "weathered aluminum finish." There were about a dozen square windows in the lower portion of the craft. In each of them, she was amazed to see the head and shoulders of a human-like figure, apparently looking in her direction.

"The heads were quite round," she said, "either bald or wearing helmets."

After a couple of minutes, the UFO rotated 90 degrees and flew away rapidly and silently to the northwest. The witness was familiar with most types of conventional aircraft, and was certain this was something else. (343)

Outside the United States, one of the most detailed occupant cases of the period took place in Sweden, as recounted by the witness, a prominent Swedish businessman:

"It was an evening in May 1946. When I saw a light among the trees, I thought at first that someone had made afire. When I reached the place, however, I saw a disc-shaped object with a cupola.

The cupola seemed to be a cabin with oval windows. Above it there was a mast, almost like the periscope of a submarine. Beneath the disc, there was a big, oblong fin. There were also two metal landingjegs. A smal ladder reached to the ground from a door beside the fin.

The object was approximately 53 feet in diameter and 13 feet from top to bottom at the middle.

There were a lot of holes like those of a turbine around the edge of the disc. Jet beams darted from the holes which burned the grass when the object departed.

The light came from the mast. It was about 17 feet in height, and three antennae were suspended from its top. Lower down, something like a lampshade was hanging. It was shining with a strange purple light which covered not only the whole object, but also the ground a couple of feet beyond it. The light was flowing and pulsating from the "lampshade" like water from a fountain. Where the light hit the ground, I could see a sparkling effect.

On the ground, a man in white, closely-fitting overal s was standing. He raised his hand toward me, so I stopped. I was less than 30 feet from him. He was approximately as tal as I am-maybe a few inches shorter-but thinner than me.

There were others like him. It seemed as if they had just finished repairing a window, because they put their tools away and looked at me. There were three men working at the window and two more were standing alongside. There were three women as wel , and one more came out of the object later. On the far side, there was another guard. In al , I saw 11 persons.

They al wore short, black boots and gloves, a black belt around the waist and a transparent helmet. The women had ashen-colored hair. I could not see the hair of the men as they wore black caps.

They were al brown-colored, as if sunburned.

I went a few steps closer, but the guard raised his hand again. The guard had a black box on his chest which was suspended by a chain around his neck. It looked like an old camera. He turned it toward me. I thought I heard a click from my forehead lamp. The lamp did not work after that. When I returned home, I found that the battery had run out, although it was a new one".

The witness turned and walked home at that point, but his curiosity got the better of him. He

returned to the site about half an hour later in time to see the UFO depart. He said it rose vertical y to a height of about 1,500 feet, "wobbled" briefly and then flew off at a tremendous speed. (344) A few months later, two South African women got a good look at the exceptional y tal occupants of the UFO they encountered one evening in Johannesburg.

They first spotted the object hovering just above the roof of a hotel. It was saucer-shaped with a round, gold-colored bal in the center. They heard a clicking noise and watched as the bal separated from the rest of the saucer. The witnesses were puzzled because there seemed to be no hole where the bal had previously been.

The women had no time to dwel on the matter, however. There was another series of clicks, and the bal rose back inside the saucer, passed completely through it and came to a stop about 8 or 9 feet above it.Two figures suddenly appeared in the space between the bal and the saucer. They looked like normal humans, except that they were about seven feet tal . One of the witnesses described them as "very good looking" and said they had fair complexions, broad shoulders and short, wavy hair. She added that the two individuals looked like identical twins. They were wearing white uniforms with stiff col ars and wide belts. The duo stood motionless and stared at the two women.

The incident ended when the UFO and its handsome occupants moved slowly off and were blocked from the witness' view by the building. (345) An incident which reportedly occurred in western Canada in the spring of 1947 was

noteworthy for several reasons. It featured some very non-humanoid occupants, along with apparent inter-species communication and physical aftereffects.

This remarkable encounter took place in a sparsely-populated area near Langley, British Columbia and involved two young boys:

"My brother and I were at the creek that ran close to our home. He was in the water catching minnows, and I sat under a tree reading. I heard a hum, hut thought nothing of it.

The next I knew, a silver-gray UFO sat down right in front of me. A door opened, and out walked four or five grotesque creatures looking like praying mantis (and) wearing dull, silver-gray body fitted covering (with) no buttons (or) zippers.

One creature came right to me, and stood looking at me. (It) took my book and looked at it. It put its hands on my shoulder. It looked into my eyes deeply. I could hear the black eyes click, just like a camera. The creature said by telepathy, "We are leaving now. Do not look up. Do not look up"

The next thing I heard was a hum. I look(ed) up. (The UFO) was right over my head, going up quickly into a sky that had four military planes. The UFO just slid right across the sky going towards Washington. There is no way those planes could ever catch it.

I cal ed to my brother. He did not move. I had to step into the creek, take him by the hand (and) cal his name".

The brothers returned home at that point, but side effects of their encounter persisted:

"We needed water. I could not drink enough. I spent many days in bed. When I was able to walk around, I could see a large circle of burnt or black grass". (346) There were also reports of other UFO crashes in the months immediately preceding the Roswel incident.

One part of trie lore surrounding Roswel is that UFO crash debris and alien bodies al egedly recovered there in July 1947 were secretly shipped to Wright Field (now Wright-Patterson Air Force Base) in Dayton, Ohio. If so, it may not have been the first time.

In June 1946, a young boy visiting his father on the base claimed he caught a glimpse of something incredible through a partial y open hangar door. He said it was a domed saucer approximately 20 feet in diameter sitting on three legs. Next to the craft were three or four smal , humanoid bodies on stretchers. The dead creatures were brownish colored and had disproportionately large, pear-shaped heads.

A colonel noticed the boy looking through the door. A short time later, the boy's father lost his job. The boy's grandfather, who was also a civilian employee at the base, reportedly confirmed that a UFO had been brought there. (347)

Around the same time, three people observed what may have been a UFO crash in the upper Midwest. As recounted by one of the witnesses:

"I was lying on a dock in Oconomowoc Lake in central Wisconsin, when directly overhead there appeared a shiny speck in an otherwise spotless blue sky. As two friends watched with me, it slowly became larger and closer.

It looked like a pointed, silver-colored cam, and it sparkled in the sunlight as it tumbled over and over, fal ing faster and faster.

We very carefully watched where it fel , because we intended to go and look for it. As we watched, a column of black smoke rose from the spot. We got the car, and when we reached the place about three miles away, a barn was burning.

Nearby vil agers from Okouchee said they had heard an explosion. I cal ed the fire chief and several others, but they thought I was crazy". (348)

This sounds a lot like a description of a satel ite fal ing to Earth-except that there were no man-made satel ites in 1946.

Witnesses were closer to the crash site when a UFO came down in Sweden that same summer.

A number of beachgoers reportedly observed a "projectile trailing luminous smoke" plow into the sand and create a crater of slag-like material. One witness described the stil -intact object as a cylinder between 65 and 100 feet in diameter.

The Swedish military was said to have handled the investigation of the incident. They concluded the witnesses had hal ucinated the whole episode. (349)

A few months later (in either October or November of 1946), a classic saucer-shaped UFO was reportedly recovered somewhere in Arkansas and transported to Wright Field.

A former airman at the base claimed he examined an object resembling two soup bowls joined at the rim inside a hangar. He estimated the craft was 15 feet in diameter and 7 feet thick, with a series of rectangular windows around its circumference. The strange craft bore no markings of any kind, and appeared to be molded of one continuous material resembling brushed aluminum.

The witness got only a brief glimpse of the UFO's interior. He said it was empty except for a cylinder about three feet in diameter in the center of the floor. (350) Details are sketchy on another UFO crash said to have occurred in 1946 or 1947 in either Arizona or New Mexico.

The incident began when three employees of a construction company went to investigate a loud explosion nearby and found the stil -smoking wreckage of a strange aircraft unlike anything they'd ever seen before. The witnesses also claimed to have seen three smal , humanoid creatures outside the object, one of them apparently injured.

The three men said they were then taken to a nearby building and interrogated by several individuals who told them they'd witnessed a secret government project and ordered them not to talk about what they'd seen. (351)

Two other witnesses were likewise sent packing when they chanced upon the scene of a crashed UFO in Arizona in January 1947.

The two men - one a U.S. Navy enlisted man on leave and the other recently discharged from the Army - were driving on the Papagos Indian Reservation near Globe when they came upon a remarkable scene.

Half buried in the sand was a disc-shaped object about 30 feet in diameter and 18 feet thick. It had a dome on top and windows or portholes around its rim. That's about al the pair had time to notice before military personnel at the scene ordered them to continue on their way. (352) A final pre-Roswel UFO crash is al eged to have occurred near Socorro, New Mexico at the end of May 1947, more than a month before the more famous incident at Roswel .

The source of the account was a former military photographer. He claimed one occupant of the craft was kil ed in the Socorro crash, while three others emerged alive. When they were found, the survivors reportedly made crying-like sounds and clutched box-like devices to their chests. One of them

appeared to be injured.

The witness claimed he filmed two different autopsies of alien beings in July 1947 and another one in 1949. (353)

In the last week of June 1947, a private pilot named Kenneth Arnold took off from Chehalis, Washington and flew into the history books. Here's how he later described his now-famous encounter:

"The air was so smooth that day that it was a real pleasure flying. I trimmed out my airplane in the direction of Yakima, Washington, and sat in my plane observing the sky and terrain. There was a DC-4 to the rear of me approximately 15 miles distant and, I should judge, at 14,000 feet elevation. The sky and air was as clear as crystal.

I hadn't flown more than two or three minutes on my course when a bright flash reflected on my airplane. It startled me, as I thought I was too close to some other aircraft. I looked every place in the sky and couldn't find where the reflection had come from until I looked to the north of Mount Rainier.

I observed a chain of nine peculiar-looking aircraft flying from north to south at approximately 9,500 foot elevation. They were approaching Mount Rainier very rapidly, and I assumed they were jet planes. I discovered that this was where the reflection had come from, as two or three of them every few seconds would dip or change their course slightly, just enough for the sun to strike them at an angle that reflected on my plane.

These objects being quite far away, I was unable for a few seconds to make out their shape or their formation. Very shortly, they approached Mount Rainier, and I observed their outline against the snow quite plainly. I thought it was very peculiar that I couldn't find their tails.

I was determined to clock their speed, as I had two definite points I could clock them by. (Arnold later calculated the objects* speed at approximately 1,700 miles per hour-much faster than any known aircraft at the time.)

I watched these objects with great interest, as I had never before observed airplanes flying so close to the mountain tops. They flew like I have observed geese to fly-in a diagonal, chain-like line as if they were linked together. They swerved in and out of the mountain peaks. The chain of these saucer-like objects (was) at least five miles long".

Arnold made a size comparison between the UFOs and the airliner also visible to him:

"I should judge their span would have been as wide as the furtherest engines on each side of the fuselage of the DC-4. (The distance between the outside engines of a DC-4 was approximately 60 feet.) What kept bothering me as I watched them flip and flash in the sun was the fact that I couldn't make out any tail on them. The more I observed these objects, the more upset I became. I am accustomed and familiar with most al objects flying". (354) In the first week of July 1947, something crashed to earth in the desert of New Mexico and subsequently became enshrined in history as the Roswel incident. The story of Roswel , which has been told in dozens of books, movies and TV documentaries in recent years, won't be retold here.

Suffice it to say that as far as most people know, the Arnold sighting and the crash near Roswel a few days later marked the beginning of the modern UFO era. You, of course, know differently.

Postscript

Phantom Fliers And Ghost Rockets

Before closing the book on our look at UFOs in the half-century leading up to the Roswel incident, two other aerial anomalies of the period are worthy of note. This pair of puzzling phenomena, both of which span several decades, have been labeled phantom fliers and ghost rockets.

Phantom fliers is the name that's been given to reports of more or less normal-looking airplanes operating in abnormal circumstances.

For example, in 1909 - just six years after the Wright brothers' first successful flight in a rickety open biplane, at a time when al aerial trips were low level and most pilots wouldn't dream of going aloft in the dark-someone was high flying confidently across the skies of New England, frequently at night.

Witness the fol owing article from a contemporary Connecticut newspaper:

"It was on Christmas Day just passed that New Haveners witnessed for the first time in their home city an exhibition of the aeroplane.

A mysterious heavier-than-air machine circled the city at such a height that its real form, its pilot and its mechanics were not discernible. But it was enough within our vision to leave no doubt as to what the stranger was. It circled in a manner that is impossible for the bal oon or the dirigible, and it was too large for any of the feathered inhabitants of the globe.

Many of us have seen the aeroplane on exhibition in flights at low altitudes, but those who saw the mysterious stranger of Christmas were treated to the real thing in air conquests. It was a great spectacle in the skies.

The aeroplane was general y believed to be the one which has been flying for many months past in New England". (355)

Another newspaper account of a similar mystery craft's nighttime visit to the skies above Worcester, Massachusetts around the same time added more details:

"Many of the 10,000 people who saw the light are positive in their belief that (its) outlines closely resembled a monoplane of the type used by (the European aviators) Latham and Bleriot.

They say the machine was under perfect control, and that it flew close to the ground, coming as near to earth as 100 feet in Natick and later rising to fully 1,000 feet.

Some say there were two men in the craft. One was standing forward near the headlight which was seen by thousands of people, and the second man was in the stem, where a much dimmer light was burning.They say the craft at times attained a speed of fully 80 miles an hour, while again it remained stationary for 15 minutes at a time". (356)

The last-mentioned feat is one even today's fixed-wing aircraft are incapable of.

Many New Englanders suspected some local aeronautical genius was behind such sightings. And a Worcester man claiming to be just that did in fact step forward, as reported by a Boston newspaper at the time: "Walace E. Tilinghast, vice-

president of a manufacturing company, made public a story today (that) he invented, built and tested an aeroplane capable of carrying three passengers with a weight limit of 600 pounds a distance of about 300 miles, with a stop to replenish the supply of petrol, at a rate of 120 miles an hour.

He refuses to say where his flying machine is, as he wants to enter into Boston contests next year as a sure winner. He says that on September 8, he made a night trip to New York and return, at which time the machine was thoroughly tested.

In describing his machine, Mr. Til inghast says: "It is one of the monoplane type, with a spread of 72 feet, a weight of 1,550 pounds, and furnished with a 120-horsepower gasoline engine made under my own directions and specifications. It differs from others in the spread of the canvas, the spread of the plane and in stability features. Special attention is given in making it adaptable for high speed. Al the important parts are covered by patents.

Other' distinguishing features are that it cannot be capsized, is easily control ed, and the occupants ride on the body of the machine instead of having the body of the machine behind them. The headlight is made by the use of acetylene gas generated on the machine.

I decline to say where the machine was built or is stationed, because it is the business of no one but myself and my mechanics. I also decline to say what is the limit of speed of the aeroplane or the highest altitude that I can reach, because I wish to enter the international races without rivals knowing.

The machine is no experiment, as it has been thoroughly tested. Al of the tests have been under the cover of night, and have been considered successful." (357) There's conflicting evidence about the truth of Til inghast's claims. On one hand, a fel ow Worcester businessman told of examining Til inghast's machine in a barn at an undisclosed location, including sitting in the craft's cockpit. The man said the machine resembled a large boat with wings, and

was propel ed by a 125-horsepower engine. (358) Then there's this report, which appeared in an area newspaper:

"Scouring the country about Worcester in a search for the home of the Til inghast machine, a United Press representative discovered at West Boylston that 14 men in the employ of Paul B. Morgan of the Morgan Construction Company of

Worcester were busy in some secret occupation on the old estate of John B. Gough, the old-time temperance lecturer.

On this estate, and situated in dense woods, there is a shed more than 100 feet long which, it is believed, contains the aeroplane that is to startle the world. No aeroplane was seen by the United Press representative, however. As he was advancing through the woods to reconnoiter, he was captured by some of the men employed on the estate, hauled before a justice of the peace and fined for trespass.

This, so far, is the only clue to the aeroplane. That it is pregnant with possibilities, however, is certain from the fact that Paul B. Morgan is known as an intimate of Wal ace E. Til inghast, and is also known to be interested in aerial navigation.

Two years ago, Morgan spent $15,000 on the aeroplane of a Swedish aviator, but later abandoned it as unsatisfactory. It is now thought that with Til inghast he has perfected the machine which has been sailing over New England". (359)

On the other hand, Til inghast promised to put his creation on public display at a local airshow.

However, Til inghast and his machine were no-shows at that event, and no one ever came forward to say they'd actual y seen Til inghast's airplane fly.

In 1910, some intrepid aerial navigator decided to pay a nighttime visit to the Big Apple.

According to a New York newspaper, the sound of a motor could clearly be heard as the "long, black object" flew over Manhattan at low altitude:

"The vague bulk, as it came into nearer view, took on the semblance of a biplane. It swung past the (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company) tower, then turned and described one graceful circle after another around the il uminated structure, its outlines standing out clear in the lights from many windows".

(360)

Four years later (in 1914), many Canadians were convinced they were under aerial assault from someone, presumably Germany. (As part of the British empire during World War I, Canada was at war with Germany. But no German aircraft of the time was even remotely capable of conducting a trans-Atlantic raid.)

According to a newspaper in the Niagara area:

"Captain Scobel , on guard at the Wel and Canal, reported that during the past four nights, the soldiers on the canal have seen airships flying over the city.

They carried red lights. One of them dropped a rocket large enough to wreck a house had it hit it.

The soldiers found the rocket in the morning.

Friday night, an airship flew so low over the city that the soldiers at Lock 7 clould plainly discern the framework". (361)

A month later, the mysterious aerial visitor returned to Niagara Fal s:

"Reports have been circulated that an airship has been seen flying over the city during the last few nights, which has caused anxiety in some circles. The military guard are keeping a sharp lookout at night.

The government has issued a proclamation prohibiting any aeroplanes of a private or public nature being used in Canada during the war crisis.

Many residents have been attracted by the noise of the machine at night, and have seen a light traveling across the skies which they believe is carried by a flying machine". (362) Evidently no respecter of international boundaries, the phantom flier appeared in daylight over nearby Buffalo, New York early in 1915, as reported in an area newspaper at the time: "The outline of the aircraft could be plainly discerned. At times, the machine seemed to head directly for the Canadian shore, and then quickly swerve(d) back again. It was going at a terrific pace, and caused considerable excitement". (363)

Whatever their origin, these unidentified aircraft were stil flying around the area a year later, as a

Canadian newspaper reported in January 1916:

"A large monoplane was seen over Stamford on Thursday evening with many lights on. It was seen by a number of residents, and through glasses appeared to be of a great size.

(Six people) al saw the aeroplane through glasses. They could distinctly see red and white lights at each side, and counted in al 27 lights. There was a headlight of great power.

It traveled in the direction of the Wel and Canal, then circled and took a westerly course". (364) Such flights were extraordinary not only because they occurred at night, but also because most of them took place during harsh Canadian winter weather.

The government of Canada was so concerned by these unidentified intruders into its airspace that for a time the lights of the parliament buildings in Ottawa were ordered extinguished at night so as not to provide an easy target for enemy bombers. The authorities viewed their precautions as successful, since no bombs were ever dropped on the Canadian capital. (365)

The next major wave of phantom flier activity occurred in Scandinavia during the 1930s, when newspapers in Norway, Sweden and Finland featured hundreds of reports of unidentified aircraft operating-usual y at night and frequently in winter-in some of the most dangerous flying conditions found anywhere on Earth.

A number of these sightings consisted largely of strange lights in the nighttime sky and could wel have had astronomical explanations. Other reports, however, appeared to involve intel igently-control ed objects. One night in March 1934, for example, a Norwegian teenager heard the sound of an engine and traced it to aerial lights approaching her from the north. As the lights got closer, she saw they were part of a large, elongated object lit on its front and side with several lights of various colors. Most of the lights were white, and the strongest one was at the front.

The witness could see a number of stars and the northern lights at the time, and was certain the unknown craft was none of these. She lost sight of the UFO when it continued flying south at a high rate of speed. (366)

A couple of months earlier, the crew of a Norwegian freighter had returned to port with a strange tale of a close encounter at sea with an unknown aircraft.

According to the ship's captain, an airplane suddenly emerged from the darkness headed straight for them. It flew to within a few yards of the vessel before banking away. Then it flew over the ship and swept the deck with the beam of a bright searchlight before disappearing into the darkness from whence it came.

The captain described the airplane as large and gray, without any visible insignia or markings. It reminded him somewhat of the French-built plane recently used by the polar explorer Roald Amundsen.

He said it came so close to his ship that he could see the pilot, who was wearing goggles and a hooded jacket. (367)

A favorite maneuver of the phantom fliers was circling over strategic instal ations and inspecting them with searchlights.

An air force general in neighboring Sweden released the fol owing statement to the press in 1934:

"Comparison of these reports shows that there can be no doubt about il egal air traffic over our secret military areas. There are many reports from reliable people which describe close observations of the enigmatic fliers. And in every case, the same remark has been noted: No insignias or identifying marks were visible on the machine". (368)

Adding to the mystery was the fact that whoever was at the controls of these aircraft routinely engaged in actions that no sane pilot would attempt at the time. This included flying in blizzards at night and circling at low altitude (an estimated 100 feet above the ground on one occasion) with their engines turned off.

Many of the mystery craft were also described as being larger than other known aircraft of the time. One group of five witnesses counted eight propel ers on the plane they observed.

At one point, the Swedish air force sent 24 of its planes to an area where phantom fliers had been

reported to search for them. Not only did they fail to find any trace of the unknown craft, but two of their own planes crashed due to the harsh conditions. By contrast, there wasn't a single report of a phantom flier either crashing or landing for repairs during the entire 1933-1937 wave of Scandinavian sightings.

(369)

A decade later, Scandinavia was also the primary setting for another phenomenon that resembled known technology in appearance, but was of unknown origin-

ghost rockets.

There were literal y thousands of reports of missile-like objects seen streaking across the skies of (and sometimes impacting into the terrain of) Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark in the years immediately fol owing the Second World War.

For its part, the U.S. government was sufficiently concerned about the phenomenon to dispatch famed American aviation expert General James Doolittle to the region to investigate (under cover of a business trip). (370)

In Sweden, where over 1,000 ghost rocket sightings were logged in 1946 alone, a report by that nation's military designed for public consumption concluded that 80 percent of the sightings had a natural explanation:

"The majority of sightings with certainty result from celestial phenomena (which) often occur, but usual y do not attract any special attention. Since the interest of the general public was awoken, (they) started to take a closer note of them, therefore the large number of reports.

Some sightings cannot, however, be explained. But this should not be attributed to some sort of object of a different kind. Not enough information is in hand to be able to draw firm conclusions with any certainty concerning their nature, origin and appearance.

Through a col aboration with astronomers, it was clear that the two "peaks" in July and August probably were caused by meteors or meteorites.

Military authorities tried to clarify the origin of the phenomena. (Radar tracking) proved impossible to establish what kind of object it was.

(Crash) remains mainly consist of coke or slag-like formations. In no case has anything come forth that can be considered material from any kind of space projectile". (371) A secret British intel igence report from around the same time offered a somewhat different take on the subject:

"A large number of visual observations have been obtained from Scandinavia. An analysis suggests the most notable characteristics of the projectiles to be:

- great speed

- intense light frequently associated with missile

- lack of sound

- approximate horizontal flight.

Thus, if the phenomena are of natural origin, they are unusual". (372) Here are a few representative ghost rocket accounts so you can judge for yourself.

In July 1946, several witnesses reported that something resembling a German V-1 guided missile crashed into Lake Mjosa in southeastern Norway around noon. They said it approached from the west at a height of about 164 feet, making a whistling noise and causing trees in its path to sway.

The witnesses described the object as cigar-shaped and a little over 8 feet in length, with three-foot long wings on either side of its fuselage about three feet back of the nose. They said the front and rear sections were shiny, while the middle and the wings were dark-colored. The wings appeared to flap slightly. The object emitted no visible exhaust, flame or light.

Several of the witnesses thought they saw two objects, one trailing the other. The Norwegian military investigated the incident, but never made their findings public. (373) The day after the Lake Mjosa incident, a similar incident occurred in neighboring Sweden when something crashed into Lake Kolmjarv in the northern part of the country. Like the incident in Norway the previous day, this also happened around noon.

According to one of the eyewitnesses:

"Suddenly, I heard a humming sound from the sky. I looked up (and) spotted a rocket-like device diving towards the lake. It had a snub nose, while the stern was pointed. I thought there were two wing-like protrusions on the side, but I'm not sure. Everything happened so quickly".

Another witness said the object made a loud noise unlike anything he'd ever heard before while it was in the air, and sounded like a bomb exploding when it hit the water.

A Swedish military unit appeared on the scene the next morning. One report said they found an impact crater on the bottom of the lake, but no trace of the object

itself. (374) On the other hand, this may have been the same incident a contemporary American aviation magazine had in mind when it informed its readers:

"One missile fel into a lake in Sweden. Government authorities quickly took over and dredged for the object, using some 600 military personnel. Witnesses said heavy material, wel covered, was shipped out of the area during the night. Nothing has been heard of the matter since". (375) About a month after the back-to-back incidents at the two lakes, it was the turn of a Swedish scientist to turn in a ghost rocket sighting:

"I was studying some clouds through a telescope when suddenly I observed a luminescent point on the horizon. I first believed it to be an airplane, but soon I noticed it was traveling much too fast for that.

Within 10 seconds, I got a full view of the projectile. I managed to get a clear view of its body, and estimated that it was at least 90 feet long. The body was torpedo-shaped and shining like metal.

No sound could be heard, although the projectile was only (1-1/4 miles) away. At the explosion, a terrific light flared up that for a moment completely blinded me. No fire, smoke or sparks were noticeable". (376)

Three days later, a Swedish air force pilot logged a rare air-to-air sighting of a ghost rocket over the central part of the country, as described in a since-declassified U.S. intel igence report:

"He saw a dark, cigar-shaped object about 50 feet above and approximately 6,500 feet away from him traveling at an estimated 400 miles per hour.

The missile had no visible wings, rudder or other projecting part, and there was no indication of any fuel exhaust, as had been reported in the majority of other sightings.

The missile was maintaining a constant altitude over the ground, and was fol owing the large features of the terrain. This statement casts doubt on the reliability of the entire report, because a missile without wings is unable to maintain a constant altitude over hil y terrain". (377) The terrain-hugging ability of the object may have seemed impossible at the time, but as a Swedish defense expert wrote recently: "If the observations are correct, many details suggest that it

was some kind of a cruise missile that was fired on Sweden. But nobody had that kind of sophisticated technology in 1946". (378)

A contemporary published report attributed another unusual form of maneuverability to ghost rockets: "Some are believed to be remote control ed, and have been seen changing their course and heading eastward again like mechanical boomerangs". (379) The most popular theory put forth to explain these ghost rockets is that they were V-2 rockets like those Hitler launched against London and other cities near the end of World War II, although some eyewitness descriptions more closely matched the V-2's predecessor, the V-1 guided missile. (V-1s were 27 feet long, with a horizontal tail, stubby wings and a jet engine mounted on top of a torpedo-shaped body. The only attachments on the 46-foot-long, bullet-shaped V-2 were four tail fins.) Presumably, they were being test flown by the Russians, who occupied the former German rocket facility at Peenemunde on the Baltic coast opposite Scandinavia. This idea was publicly shot down by al the governments involved, but is lent credence by the fol owing once-classified 1946 memo to President Harry Truman from one of his intel igence advisors, General Hoyt Vandenberg:

"Since preparation of our original memorandum dated 1 August 1946 on the subject of "Ghost Rockets" over Scandinavia, additional intel igence indicates that the former tentative conclusions should be somewhat modified.

While it was original y believed that the German instal ations at Peenemunde had been dismantled

and shipped to the U.S.S.R., General McNarney now reports that Peenemunde is operational.

The U.S. Military Attache Moscow has reported that a key Swedish air officer stated that, on the basis of Swedish radar course-plotting, most of the launchings have been identified with the Peenemunde area.

An A.S.C. source indicates that a Soviet ship is reporting by radio to shore stations on the passage of these missiles from Peenemunde over the north Baltic.

The Leopoldvil e radio reported in July that the Soviets were warning shipping against passage through certain parts of the Baltic and were threatening the death penalty to seamen who might disclose the "phenomena" which they saw.

On the basis of the above evidence it seems probable that the U.S.S.R. is carrying out large-scale guided-missile tests around the Baltic, in which most of the missiles are launched from the Peenemunde area and traverse Sweden toward the Gulf of Bothnia.

It is the belief of CIG that scientific experimentation is the primary Soviet objective and that political considerations, although thoroughly appreciated, are secondary.

In view of transportation difficulties it would seem logical for the Soviets to center their experimental program around Peenemunde where manufacturing facilities, materials and German personnel would be close at hand, rather than to set up new instal ations in Russia". (380) There are several factors weighing against the V-2 theory, however. For one thing, many of the size estimates given by ghost rocket witnesses describe objects either much larger or smal er than a V-2.

(As previously mentioned, the standard V-2 was 46 feet long, although advanced versions that would've been twice as large were on the drawing board at war's end.) (381) For another thing, what sounded very much like ghost rockets were reported outside the Baltic area on numerous occasions.

On August 20,1946, near Dijon, France: "Huge, elongated projectiles passed overhead at prodigious speeds, emitting a whistling noise". (382)

In early September, the Greek government announced: "Flying rockets had been seen over the northern part of Greece. The rocket passing over Salonika fel into the sea. A total of four were seen".

(383)

News accounts reported that ghost rockets visited the North African nation of Morocco on two consecutive nights in mid-September:

"A flying projectile with a tail of flame was seen over the town of Fez. A similar missile was reported seen near Tangier. Witnesses at both places said that the projectiles seemed to fly at low altitude, from east to west, trailing a long, thin tail of yel ow and green light. They traveled at great speed". (384) A newspaper account of an incident on the Dutch-German border in late September gave ghost rockets an alternate name:

"More "spook bombs" have been reported by British troops in Germany, this time over the Dutch frontier. Officers and other ranks reported seeing several missiles similar to flying bombs moving at great speed from east to west". (385)

During the same period, similar reports were logged in Switzerland and Ireland. (386) Curiously, there were also a few descriptions reminiscent of the bal of light variety of foo fighter mixed in with these reports of missile-like objects.

In mid-September, the fol owing news item emerged from Portugal:

"Officials at Lisbon observatory were unable to explain reports that strange lights had been seen moving across the sky in different parts of the country. The phenomena were described as bright, greenish bal s of light, al traveling southwards". (387)

This fol owed sightings of similar objects in Dutch skies a few days earlier: "Flying firebal s with glowing tails, traveling noiselessly at high speed, have been reported at night over the north and east of Hol and". (388)

Then there was this news item describing a close encounter with a similar object in Belgium in late September:

"Police here were today examining the remains of a projectile described as a "bal of light" which fel outside a house last night. The owner of the house said that about midnight, she saw a "bal of light"

approaching at "terrific speed." The object fel in front of her house, giving off a cloud of smoke". (389) Unfortunately, there was no fol ow-up report on this intriguing incident.

Final y, several strange incidents occurred in the United States which fly squarely in the face of the leftover World War II V-2 explanation for ghost rockets. Not only because they happened thousands of miles from other reported sightings, but also because these particular incidents occurred some four decades before the first ghost rocket streaked across the skies of Scandinavia.

In 1906, five farm workers witnessed an amazing aerial display near Anadarko, Oklahoma one day around dusk when they observed a procession of peculiar objects fly by at close range. The objects were said to have resembled a length of stovepipe about 16 feet long and 9 or 10 inches in diameter.

The first object was spotted cruising at a height of approximately 60 feet. But then, according to one of the men:

"(It) sank down, came toward us, and passed within about 16 feet of us at eye level. Another one came sailing along behind the first. The second was just like the first in size and shape. There was another and another.

We stood out there watching for almost 20 minutes. I don't know how many of those things went by in that time". (390)

A similar-looking object figured in an equal y amazing aerial drama played out before an audience of prominent citizens in Burlington, Vermont the fol owing year (1907). A clergyman who had one of the best views of the incident described what he saw for a local newspaper:

"I was standing on the corner of Church and Col ege streets, just in front of the Howard Bank and facing east, engaged in conversation with ex-Governor Moodbury and Mr. A.A. Buel when, without the slightest indication of warning, we were startled by what sounded like a most unusual and terrific explosion, evidently very near by.

Looking eastward along Col ege Street, I observed a torpedo-shaped body some 300 feet away, stationary and suspended about 50 feet above the tops of the buildings. It was about six feet long by eight inches in diameter. The shel (had) a dark appearance, with here and there tongues of fire issuing from spots on the surface resembling red hot, unburnished copper.

Although stationary when first noticed, this object soon began to move, rather slowly, and disappeared over Dolan Brothers' store (headed) southward. As it moved, the covering seemed rupturing in places, and through these the intensely red flames issued.

When first seen, it was surrounded by a halo of dim light some 20 feet in diameter. There was no odor that I am aware of perceptible after the disappearance of the phenomenon, nor was there any damage done so far as known to me.

I hope I may never hear or see a similar phenomenon, at least at such close range". (391) Notes

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